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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Musk to take on Microsoft with Macrohard

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has announced the launch of a new company, Macrohard, aimed at challenging Microsoft's dominance in the software sector by harnessing the power of artificial intelligence. In a post on X, Musk confirmed the project, saying: "It's a tongue-in-cheek name, but the project is very real!" He explained that since companies like Microsoft do not manufacture hardware, AI could potentially simulate their entire software ecosystem. *—PTI*

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Woman slapped 8 times for feeding dogs in Ghaziabad

GHAZIABAD, 23 AUG

A woman was slapped eight times in 40 seconds by a man for feeding stray dogs near his apartment complex in Ghaziabad's Vijaynagar area. Yashika Shukla said she was feeding the dogs late on Friday night at a designated feeding spot when Kamal Khanna, a resident of Brahmaputra Enclave Society, confronted her and assaulted her repeatedly. The incident, captured on video, shows Ms Shukla asking someone to record as Mr Khanna continues hitting her, responding, "Yes, record this." The video has since gone viral. Police have registered a case and taken Mr Khanna into custody. The assault comes hours after the Supreme Court ordered that stray dogs be vaccinated, sterilised, and released, with designated feeding areas established. *—Agencies*

SIT ARRESTS DHARMASTHALA WHISTLEBLOWER

Accused of giving 'false info' on mass murders

MANGALURU, 23 AUG

A whistleblower, who had alleged hundreds of murders, rapes, and clandestine burials in Dharmasthala over two decades, was arrested on Saturday by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating the claims, officials confirmed. The individual, whose identity was previously concealed behind a mask, has now been formally identified.

Following a medical examination, the accused was taken before Judicial First Class Magistrate Vijayendra in Belthangady, where the SIT sought and secured a 10-day custody order for further probing.

SIT, led by senior IPS officer Pronab Mohanty, had interrogated the whistleblower late on Friday.

"Inconsistencies" in his testimonies and supporting documents prompted the arrest, with Chinnaiah now charged under Section 211(a) of the BNS Act for providing false information and misleading the investigation.

On 11 July, Chinnaiah had produced human remains — claiming they were those of a woman he claimed had been sexually assaulted and buried during his tenure as a sanitation worker in Dharmasthala between 1995 and 2014. Forensic analysis, however, revealed the remains belonged to a man.

The case has now taken a political turn, with BJP accusing Congress of a conspiracy against the temple *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari of Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple, welcomed the arrest, stating that "the truth is beginning to come out." He added that previous allegations had been "unfounded," causing undue distress to devotees and the local community.

Investigators have so far conducted excavations at 15 sites in the forested areas along the Netravathi River, identified by Chinnaiah. Skeletal remains were unearthed at two sites, but only one set has been recovered.

In a related development, Sujata Bhatt, who had claimed her MBBS-student daughter Ananya was missing in Dharmasthala, admitted her daughter never existed. She disclosed that her false claim stemmed from anger linked to a family property dispute with the temple trust.

Security around Bhatt's Bengaluru residence has been tightened following her retraction, and the SIT is preparing to record her detailed statement.

Political tensions have flared, with the BJP accusing the Congress-led State government of allowing a "malicious campaign" against Dharmasthala to unfold unchecked.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar retorted that the BJP was politicising a "sensitive issue," stressing that "we will act only on facts, not propaganda." *—PTI*

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K'taka Cong MLA arrested in betting case, ₹12 cr cash found

BENGALURU, 23 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Karnataka Congress MLA KC Veerendra 'Puppy' in Sikkim for an alleged illegal online and offline betting scam.

The federal probe agency said it seized Rs 12 crore in cash (including about Rs crore in foreign currency), gold jewellery worth Rs 6 crore, silver about 10kg along with four vehicles following raids launched on Friday in multiple states.

The agency concluded the raids on Saturday from 31 locations including Chitradurga, Hubballi and Bengaluru in Karnataka, Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Sikkim, Mumbai and Goa. Five casinos in Goa named Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino were also raided. The ED said the 50-year-old MLA from Chitradurga Assembly seat in Karnataka was taken into custody from Sikkim's capital Gangtok on Friday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The legislator had gone to Gangtok along with his associates on a business visit to lease a casino, the agency said.

"Many property-related documents were also seized from the premises of Veerendra's brother KC Nagaraj and his son Pruthvi N Raj. His other associates like another brother KC Thippeswamy are handling operations of online gaming from Dubai," the ED said.

Veerendra, according to the ED, is accused of running online betting sites his brother KC Thippeswamy operates three business entities from Dubai. *—PTI*

ED seized Rs 12 crore in cash, gold jewellery worth Rs 6 crore, silver about 10kg along with four vehicles KC Veerendra Puppy's premises *PHOTO: ED*

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India halts postal services to US over customs confusion

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

The Ministry of Communications announced on Saturday that postal services from India to the United States have been temporarily suspended after US-bound air carriers refused to carry shipments due to a lack of clarity over new American customs rules.

Under an Executive Order issued by the US administration on 30 July, 2025, goods valued above USD 100 sent to the US will attract customs duties from 29 August 2025. The order requires transport carriers or other "qualified parties" approved by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to collect and remit duties on such postal consignments.

Although the CBP released guidelines on 15 August, 2025, several critical processes including the designation of qualified parties and mechanisms for duty collection remain undefined. Consequently, US bound air carriers have expressed their inability to accept postal consignments from 25 August, 2025, citing operational and technical unpreparedness.

Following this, the Department of Posts has temporarily halted booking of all postal articles destined for the US, except letters, documents, and gift items valued up to USD 100. *—PTI*

CM WATCH: WEALTH PEAKS, SO DO CASES

PHOTO: AI

India's 30 CMs together own assets worth Rs 1,632 crore, according to Association for Democratic Reforms. Topping the list is Andhra's Chandrababu Naidu as the richest, while West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee ranks as the poorest.

TOP 10 RICHEST CMs

1.	**CHANDRABABU NAIDU,** Andhra	(TDP)	RS 931 CRORE
2.	**PEMA KHANDU,** Arunachal	(BJP)	RS 332 CRORE
3.	**SIDDARAMAIAH,** Karnataka	(Cong)	RS 51 CRORE
4.	**NEIPHIU RIO,** Nagaland	(NDPP)	RS 46.95 CR
5.	**MOHAN YADAV,** MP	(BJP)	RS 42.04 CR
6.	**REVANTH REDDY,** Telangana	(ConG)	RS 30.04 CR
7.	**HEMANT SOREN,** Jharkhand	(JMM)	RS 25.33 CR
8.	**HIMANTA BISWA SARMA,** Assam	(BJP)	RS 17.27 CR
9.	**CONRAD SANGMA,** Meghalaya	(NPP)	RS 14.06 CR
10.	**MANIK SAHA,** Tripura	(BJP)	RS 13.9 CR

CMs WITH THE LOWEST ASSETS

1.	**PINARAYI VIJAYAN,** Kerala (CPI(M))	RS 1.18 CRORE
2.	**OMAR ABDULLAH,** J&K (NC)	RS 55.24 LAKH
3.	**MAMATA BANERJEE,** West Bengal (TMC)	RS 15.38 LAKH

CRIMINAL CASES

The report reveals that 12 CMs face criminal cases. The revelation comes at a crucial time, as a Joint Parliamentary Committee is set to examine three Bills that propose the removal of Ministers, including Chief Ministers, if they are arrested in serious criminal cases.

1.	Revanth Redduy	89	4.	Siddaramaiah	13
2.	MK Stalin, TN (DMK)	47	5.	Hemant Soren	5
3.	Chandrababu Naidu	19	6.	Devandra Fadnavis	4

Trump loyalist Gor is India's US Envoy

WASHINGTON, 23 AUG

President Donald Trump has nominated **Sergio Gor**, his White House personnel director and a staunch loyalist, as the next US Ambassador to India. The 38-year-old will also serve as Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs.

Gor's appointment comes at a time of strained US-India relations, particularly over trade issues. Announcing the decision on social media, President Trump said, "For the most populous region in the world, it is important that I have someone I can fully trust to deliver on my agenda and help us 'Make America Great Again'."

A key figure in Trump's 2024 re-election campaign, Gor played a prominent role in the political action committee (PAC) and gained significant influence after being tasked with vetting political appointees in the current administration.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

His nomination follows the January resignation of former Ambassador Eric Garcetti, leaving the post vacant for months. *—PTI*

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TARIFFS, RUSSIA, PAK 3 ISSUES WITH US: EAM

New Delhi, 23 Aug

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday outlined three key issues affecting India-US ties: trade tariffs, energy ties with Russia, and Washington's stance on India-Pakistan relations.

Speaking at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum, Jaishankar said India has "red lines" in trade talks, particularly around protecting farmers and small producers. His comments come just days before fresh US tariffs, including an additional 25 per cent duty on goods linked to India's Russian crude purchases, come into effect.

Criticising US objections to India-Russia energy trade, Jaishankar questioned why similar scrutiny isn't directed at China or the EU, the top importers of Russian energy.

On regional security, he firmly rejected any US mediation in India-Pakistan ties, saying there has been a national consensus against it for over 50 years. *—PTI*

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J&K govt takes over 215 JeI-linked schools

SRINAGAR, 23 AUG

The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Saturday took over the management of 215 schools affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and its Falah-e-Aam Trust (FAT), drawing sharp criticism from political parties across the Valley. Over 51,000 students are enrolled in these institutions.

District administration teams, accompanied by police, assumed charge of the schools across 10 districts, inspecting infrastructure and interacting with staff. The process, officials said, was conducted peacefully without disrupting classes.

The School Education Department had ordered the takeover to "safeguard the academic future" of students. However, Education Minister Sakina Itoo distanced herself from the order, calling it "distorted". She claimed she had approved a draft stating schools would be managed temporarily by principals of nearby higher secondary schools—not deputy commissioners, as the final order stated.Itoo emphasised the government had not banned or shut the schools but would manage them only until new committees, with clean CID verifications, are formed. She admitted the management committees of these schools had failed CID verifications 6–8 years ago.

PHOTO: X

The Home Ministry banned JeI in 2019, reaffirming the ban in 2024 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. *—PTI*

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SYSTEMIC HEALTHCARE FAILURE

Newborn dies as UP hospital delays surgery over fees; dad takes body to DM

LAKHIMPUR KHERI, 23 AUG

A private hospital in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri was sealed on Saturday after a man, Vipin Gupta, reached the District Magistrate's (DM) office carrying the dead body of his newborn child in a bag, alleging medical negligence and extortion during his wife's delivery.

Gupta said he admitted his wife to Goldar Hospital, where the staff initially demanded Rs 10,000 for a normal delivery and Rs 12,000 for a Caesarean section. However, as labour progressed, the hospital allegedly hiked the fees and refused to treat her until the full amount was paid.

"I somehow arranged the money by 2.30amand begged them to start the procedure, promising to arrange the rest. But they kept increasing the charges and refused to operate without full payment," Gupta told ANI.

In a desperate act, Gupta carried his dead child to the DM's office, demanding justice *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Tragically, the newborn died due to the delay. Gupta alleged that the hospital then threw his wife out on the road, forcing the family to seek help elsewhere.

In a desperate act, Gupta carried his dead child to the DM's office, demanding justice. He was later accompanied by DM Mahendra Bahadur Singh, who ordered the immediate sealing of Goldar Hospital.

Following the incident, patients from the hospital were shifted to government facilities. Additional District Magistrate AK Rastogi also visited another hospital to check on the mother's condition.

Authorities have initiated a probe into the hospital's conduct, and statements from the family are being recorded. The case has sparked anger locally and intensified calls for tighter regulation of private hospitals. *—PTI*

CBI books Anil Ambani in Rs 2,929 cr scam

NEW DELHI/MUMBA

The CBI has booked Reliance Communications Ltd (RCom), its Director Anil Ambani, and others in a Rs 2,929.05 crore bank fraud case following a complaint by State Bank of India (SBI).

Searches were conducted at Ambani's Mumbai residence and RCom's premises. The FIR alleges misrep-resentation, diversion of bank loans, and misuse of funds, with forensic audits highlighting Rs 13,667 crore used for debt repayments and Rs 12,692 crore paid to connected parties. A Rs 5,525 crore capital advance to Netizen Engineering, a group firm, was written off. Ambani denied wrongdoing, stating he was a non-executive director at the time. The matter remains sub judice before NCLT and the Supreme Court. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: X @DKSHIVAKUMAR

DKS joins RaGa's Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar

BENGALURU/PATNA, 23 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar joined party leader Rahul Gandhi's Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar. The march aims to raise awareness over the alleged vote fraud. "Glad to join Gandhi and (RJD leader and former Bihar chief minister) Tejashwi Yadav at Katihar, Bihar for the Voter Adhikar Yatra," Shivakumar wrote on X. "It's our commitment to stand united for the rights of every voter. "One Nation - One Vote," the Deputy Chief Minister added. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is set to join the movement on 29 Aug. *—Salar News*

Kolar docs save premature baby born at 27 weeks

KOLAR, 23 AUG

Doctors at Vamshodaya Hospital have successfully saved a male infant born nine weeks premature, weighing only 650 grams at birth. Delivered at 27 weeks, the baby was kept on artificial respiration in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for 50 days, followed by oxygen support for another 25 days. After nearly three months of intensive care, the child now weighs 2 kg and was discharged with the mother. Dr. Aravind said the baby's weight was the biggest concern. The baby was monitored round-the-clock under senior neonatologist Dr. Manoj Kumar. The child is expected to lead a normal life with regular check-ups. In 2023, Dr. Beere Gowda of Chowdeswari Nursing Home saved a 600-gram baby in a similar case. *—Salar News*

Transport min to mediate for Anekal farmers

BENGALURU, 23 AUG

Relief washed over the State Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy promised to mediate between a crucial meeting between Industries Minister MB Patil and protesting farmers against a 2,451 acres land acquisition of in Anekal taluk. A delegation of Anekal farmers met Reddy and urged him to help safeguard their homes, polyhouses, and farmlands from acquisition under the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB). Reddy said that he will hold a joint meeting on 26 August with Minister Patil, along with local MLAs and 15 farmer leaders. Relieved over the news, KC Jayaprakash, honorary president of the Anekal Land Acquisition Protest Committee, said, "This is a big step forward for our struggle to save Anekal's farmland. On behalf of all farmers, we thank Reddy." *—Salar News*

HM says D'sthala probe will continue

Parameshwara says unclear if there was a conspiracy; DKS says don't play politics over issue

BENGALURU/ UDUPI, 23 AUG

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday confirmed the arrest of the Dharmasthala complainant who had claimed to have buried hundreds of bodies, many bearing signs of sexual abuse, but said that the probe will continue. No conclusion could be drawn until the SIT completes its probe, he remarked.

"Based on the complainant's complaint, a probe began. Now that he has been arrested, the investigation will continue based on his statements," he said on Saturday.

"As the investigation is on, no information can be shared..... (Only the) SIT will share the details," Parameshwara added.

Parameshwara said it was unclear whether there was network, or "conspiracy" behind the complaint. "Once the probe report comes, it will be known."

The whistleblower had taken the SIT to 17 sites in Dharmasthala where he claimed that victims were buried. Skeletal remains were found in at least two sites **PHOTO: PTI**

On whether the SIT probe would end with the arrest of the complainant, he said, "It cannot be said."

Parameshwara added that Sujata Bhatt's complaint was under investigation.

Sujata had earlier claimed her daughter, Ananya Bhat, went missing after a trip to Dharmasthala in 2003. She has since made contradictory statements, reportedly saying she never had a daughter and that a false complaint was filed at the instigation of others. She later retracted that statement.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the government has maintained that action will be taken against those who are wrong. "BJP people had not spoken anything, they are fence sitters. After I spoke on the issue (calling it a conspiracy) they are speaking," he said. Shivakumar said the government doesn't favour any particular side. "We are in favour of justice. We don't want politics to be played in religion," he added.

—Salar News with Agencies

BJP demands that the probe is handed to NIA

BENGALURU, 23 AUG

The State BJP urged the Congress government to hand over the probe to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to expose "conspirators, foreign hands and funds" behind the Dharmasthala complainant.

"This complainant is not important to us, the conspirators behind him are important. It needs to be investigated," Opposition Leader R Ashoka said. "For the government to prove that they are conducting a fair probe and they are not insulting Hindus, they will have to form a separate SIT."

"As money is said to have come from abroad and other states, the NIA probe will be required," he said.

Noting that several BJP MPs have written a letter to the Central government seeking a NIA probe, he added, "It will be good if the State gives for an NIA probe before the Centre orders it. If the State Congress government doesn't give it to the NIA, Congress' role in this will be clear."

BJP State President BY Vijayendra asked on X, "Who are the forces behind this person? Who are the people who hatched the conspiracy? All of them need to be unmasked."

Claiming the involvement of foreign forces behind the broadcasting of the campaign, the Vijayendra added, "Without limiting this case as a conspiracy against Dharmasthala, it should be considered as a systematic conspiracy against Indian's feelings and traditions."

—PTI

Veerendra's network ran from Bengaluru to Dubai

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) seized a corpus amount of goods from arrested State Congress MLA KC Veerendra 'Puppy'. Investigators believe the accused ran a systemic network of political money laundering using casinos, shell firms, and betting apps.

Veerendra, according to the ED, ran online betting sites like King567, Raja567, Puppy's003, Rathna Gaming, etc. and his brother KC Thippeswamy is alleged to be "operating" three business entities from Dubai named Diamond Softech, TRS Technologies and Prime9Technologies.

Among the seizures in the multi-state raids are a number of international casino membership and reward cards named -- MGM casino, metropolitan casino, Bellagio casino, marina casino, casino jewel, etc.

Multiple credit and debit cards of various banks and membership cards of some 5-star hotels were also seized from various locations which was not informed by the agency.

The agency said it has also frozen about 17 bank accounts and 2 lockers during the searches, even as some Instagram posts claiming the MLA had the "biggest car collection" in Chitradurga with 003 registration number plate are under probe. The ownership and source of funds of these high-end vehicles is being investigated.

The ED also seized property papers and benami documents.

The probe is expected to expand into who funded whom, how election money was routed, and whether others had knowledge of these transactions.

Meanwhile, ED sleuths raided the residence of Rajarajeshwari Nagar Congress candidate Kusuma Hanumanthrayappa's brother Anil Gowda in the City.

Kusuma, who had unsuccessfully contested from the RR Nagar constituency, is now under the scanner for alleged financial linkages to betting operations.

—Salar News with Agencies

Cash seized by the ED from multiple locations in an illegal betting case against State Congress MLA KC Veerendra 'Puppy' and others **PHOTO: PTI**

Man held for ₹34cr fraud, largest in Kalyana Karnataka

BIDAR, 23 AUG

In a significant case of tax fraud, Rahul Kulkarni, son of Kishan Kulkarni from Bidar district of the State, was arrested in Hyderabad for conducting fraudulent business transactions worth around Rs 34 crore over the past four years. The scam involved creating fake documents and issuing bogus bills, defrauding 132 individuals and evading tax payments amounting to Rs 9.25 crore.

Officials from the Kalaburagi East Zone Enforcement Wing along with officers from the City, Shivamogga, and the Telangana State Goods and Services Tax Department, detained Rahul, who misused the Aadhaar and PAN cards of family and friends. This is the largest tax fraud detected in the Kalyana Karnataka region. *—Salar News*

Police summon YouTuber after court grants bail

MANGALURU, 23 AUG

MD Sameer **PHOTO: X**

The police have issued a notice to YouTuber MD Sameer directing him to appear before the investigating officer on 24 August, officials said on Saturday.

Police said the notice, pasted at his residence in Ballari, came after a Mangaluru court granted Sameer anticipatory bail on 21 August.

Sameer faces criminal charges over content related to the Dharmasthala case.

A case has been registered against him at the Dharmasthala police station under Sections 192 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 240 (giving false information) and 353(1)(b) (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

According to police, the charges stem from a video uploaded by Sameer in which he made allegations linked to the case.

The SIT is also examining his role as part of its ongoing probe, officials said.

Sameer had earlier secured bail from a Mangaluru court in one of the cases, after which, police sources say, he grew emboldened—appearing in livestreams and boasting that he could "do whatever he wanted."

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has also reportedly begun probing financial angles linked to his activities.

—Salar News with Agencies

No verdict yet on bike taxi services, clarifies HC

The Bike Taxis Welfare Association met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and urged him to support their cause **PHOTO: X @BIKETAXIWELFARE**

BENGALURU, 23 AUG

The State High Court has clarified that it has not ordered ride-hailing companies to resume bike taxi services, following the resurgence of such operations on city roads. Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru, leading a division bench, stated that while the State government has the authority to take action against bike taxi aggregators, individual vehicle owners should not be targeted.

During a hearing on 20 August, the Court postponed further discussion to 22 September, allowing the government time to consider a policy on bike taxis. Advocate General Shashikiran Shetty informed the Court that several operators had resumed services without approval.

Previously, a single-judge bench ruled in April that bike taxi operations require guidelines as per the Motor Vehicles Act. *—PTI*

DEMAND PENDING SALARIES

Retired State government employees demand the 7th Pay Commission for employees who retired in from 2022 to 2025, during a protest at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru, on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASD**

Roof of Kalaburagi govt school collapses, 3 injured

The roof of the Kalaburagi government higher primary school in Malkapalli village **PHOTO: SALAR**

KALABURAGI, 23 AUG

Three Class 8 students were injured after the roof of a government higher primary school collapsed during lunch break in Malkapalli village in Sedam taluk, Kalaburagi on Friday. The three injured students, Akshata, Kaveri, and Srinivas, all aged 13, were taken to the primary health center in Kolakunda village for treatment.

The school has four classrooms and approximately 250 students, ranging from Class 1 to Class 8, studied in the school.

Gram Panchayat member Navadareddy Malkapalli alleged that despite informing authorities about the old school roof's condition, no action was taken.

Field Education Officer Maruti Hujrathi, after inspecting the classrooms informed the principle to conduct the future classes in a safer and convenient place. *—Salar News*

'IT'S A FARCE'

TMC & SP unlikely to join JPC on CM removal Bill

NEW DELHI, 16 OCT

The TMC on Saturday said forming a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) to look into three bills that lay down the framework for the removal of the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers is a "farce". The party said that it will not send any member to the committee.

The Samajwadi Party (SP) is also unlikely to nominate any member to the panel.

In a blogpost on Saturday, TMC's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said his party as well as the SP have decided not to nominate any members to the JPC. He claimed that the committees are skewed towards the ruling party because of its numbers in both houses of Parliament.

The three Bills have been referred to a JPC.

Derek O'Brien **PHOTO: PTI**

O'Brien claimed that in almost every JPC, there is no consensus on the final report.

"Whenever important Amendments are proposed by an Opposition MP, the Amendments are defeated in the committee by a show of hands. The ruling party uses its brute majority to do this," he alleged.

He said the Opposition members with an alternative view are outvoted. "The only recourse left is to table a dissenting note -- for the record," he noted.

"JPCs were originally conceived as democratic and well-intentioned mechanisms, established through motions passed by both Houses of Parliament and endowed with exceptional powers, such as summoning witnesses, demanding documents, and examining experts," he said.

"However, this purpose has eroded significantly post-2014, with JPCs increasingly being manipulated by the government in power. Now, in the same committee which represents public accountability, procedures are bypassed, opposition amendments rejected, and meaningful debate replaced by partisan fluff." *—PTI*

Hundreds gather to see family 'leave their bodies'

BELAGAVI, 23 AUG

Rumours that a family in Athani taluk planned to "leave their bodies" (dehatyag) on 8 September as part of a sect ritual spread like wildfire across Karnataka–Maharashtra border, drawing hundreds of villagers to their home since Friday.

Tukaram Irakar's family - residents of Shingalapur Road in Anantpur – were said to be among 21 devotees of spiritual leader Rampal Maharaj who allegedly resolved to undertake dehatyag.

Hundreds of people thronged to their house to take their darshan but could not meet them. The remaining devotees are reportedly from Pune, Kolhapur and Sangli districts.

Athani Tahasildar Siddaraya Bosage said taluk administration was trying to contact the family to understand if there was any basis to the rumours.

"Until we meet Irakar family, we condider it all as rumours," the officer said.

Belagavi Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled meanwhile, dismissed the idea as all rumours and action would be taken against those spreading them.

Dehatyag refers to the practice of committing "voluntary death". *—Salar News*

For Sale

Rental property in Tilaknagar, Jayanagar, 486SQFT, G+2 floors . 5 houses with 40,000 monthly rent.

PH:7676149282

PHOTO: ANI

Indian envoy meets US senators amid tariff tension

NEW YORK, 23 AUG

Amid rising tariff tensions between India and the US, Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra has met 19 US lawmakers since 9 August, reinforcing calls for "fair and balanced" trade ties. On Friday, Kwatra met Rep Claudia Tenney and discussed bilateral relations and India's significant hydrocarbon purchases from the US, citing energy security. He held similar discussions with Reps Jonathan L. Jackson and Haley Stevens, both of whom serve on key congressional committees. The meetings come ahead of the August 27 enforcement of President Trump's 50 per cent tariff on Indian imports, including a 25 per cent duty tied to India's Russian oil purchases. India has defended its Russian energy deals as market-driven. —*PTI*

India extends Pak airspace ban till 24 September

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

India has extended the closure of its airspace for Pakistan-registered aircraft and planes operated, owned or leased by Pakistani airlines and operators, including military flights, until 24 September. A Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued on 22 August states that Indian airspace will remain closed to Pakistani flights until 23.59 UTC on 23 September (05.30 IST on 24 September). The restriction was first imposed on 30 April following the Pahalgam terror attack on 22 April, which killed 26 people. Initially set to last until 24 May, the ban has been extended monthly. Pakistan has also extended the closure of its own airspace for Indian aircraft through a NOTAM issued on 20 August. —*PTI*

Mukhtar Ansari's son Umar moved to Kasganj prison

GHAZIPUR, 23 AUG

Umar Ansari, the younger son of late gangster turned politician Mukhtar Ansari, has been shifted from Ghazipur jail to Kasganj district prison following a government directive, officials confirmed on Saturday. Kotwali SHO Deendayal Pandey said Umar was transferred late on Friday night. Umar was arrested in Lucknow on 3 August for allegedly submitting forged documents in court while seeking the release of his late father's property, which had been seized under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters Act. According to police, the documents contained signatures purportedly belonging to Umar's mother, Afshan Ansari, who is currently absconding. An award reward of Rs 50,000 as announced for information lead to her arrest. —*PTI*

My rival supports RSS, I'm liberal: Sudershan Reddy

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

B Sudershan Reddy, the opposition's nominee for Vice President, has labelled his rival, NDA candidate CP Radhakrishnan, a "quintessential RSS man," positioning himself as a "liberal constitutional democrat" with no alignment to RSS ideology. Reddy emphasised that the election represents a contest of differing ideologies, rather than a regional battle of "South versus South," as both candidates hail from Southern states. He called for unity, stating, "India is one nation," and indicated his intention to seek support from all MPs across party lines ahead of the 9 September election, following Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation. Reddy plans to appeal in writing to the parliamentarians to exercise their franchise in a thoughtful and responsible manner. —*PTI*

US did not discuss Russian oil issue before tariffs: EAM

Don't buy Russian oil if you don't like, EAM snubs Trump

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said that India's trade in Russian oil, often presented as a contentious issue, was never discussed before US President Donald Trump imposed steep tariffs on Indian exports. He was speaking at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum 2025.

Jaishankar took aim at Trump's unconventional diplomatic style, calling it a major shift from traditional global norms. "We've not had a US President who's conducted foreign policy as publicly as the current one. That itself is a departure that's not limited to India," he said. He described Trump's approach as a "very major departure from the traditional orthodox manner" of diplomacy.

On trade, Jaishankar confirmed that negotiations with the US are ongoing but emphasised that India has "red lines"—particularly when it comes to protecting the interests of farmers and small producers. "We are committed to defending those interests. That's not something we can compromise on," he asserted.

EAM S Jaishankar took aim at Trump's unconventional diplomatic style, calling it a major shift from traditional norm PHOTO: PTI

Relations between India and the US soured after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, including an additional 25 per cent duty in response to India's purchase of discounted Russian crude oil. Responding to allegations that India is "profiteering" by refining and selling Russian oil, Jaishankar hit back sharply.

"It's funny to have people who work for a pro-business American administration accusing others of doing business," he said. "If you don't like it, don't buy it. Nobody forces you. But Europe buys, America buys, so don't be selective."

- "We've not had a US President who's conducted foreign policy as publicly as the current one. That itself is a departure that's not limited to India," Jaishankar said.

"And when people say we (India) are funding the war and putting the money, Russia-European trade is bigger than India-Russia trade. So, European money is not putting coffers? The overall Russia-EU trade is bigger than the Russia-India trade. If the argument is energy, they (EU) are bigger buyers. If the argument is who is the bigger trader, they are bigger than us. India's exports to Russia have grown, but not that much," he added.

He also rejected claims that improving India-China ties are linked to US-India tensions. "It would be a mistaken analysis to crunch everything into an integrated response to a situation," he said. —*PTI*

AMBASSADOR TO INDIA

Gor's appointment sparks fears over India & Pak strain

WASHINGTON, 23 AUG

Sergio Gor, a close ally of President Donald Trump and described by him as a "great friend" who has been at his side for many years, has been nominated as the next US Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South and Central Asian Affairs.

Gor's appointment was criticised by many strategic affairs experts in India as he will be watching New Delhi's relationship within the region, including with Pakistan in that role.

"This means he will be consulting and coordinating with other US ambassadors in the region to develop a more integrated approach," said Kanwal Sibal, a former foreign secretary.

"This is a new form of 'hyphenating' India and Pakistan again, amongst other things," he observed.

Currently serving as White House Director of Presidential Personnel, Gor will continue in that role until Senate confirmation. President Trump

Sergio Gor PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

praised his contributions, noting Gor had helped appoint nearly 4,000 "America First Patriots" across federal departments, and played key roles in his political campaigns, publishing ventures, and major Super PACs.

Gor's nomination also drew attention due to his reported role in Trump's dramatic fallout with tech billionaire Elon Musk, who once referred to Gor as a "snake".Trump's decision was welcomed by senior members of his administration, including Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. Rubio called Gor a great US representative. —*PTI*

VOTE THEFT CLAIMS

Tejashwi Yadav faces FIR for 'jumla' post against Modi

KATIHAR, 23 AUG

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday asserted that he was "not afraid" of an FIR lodged in BJP-ruled Maharashtra, over his social media post (pic) about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and he will "continue to speak the truth".

Yadav has been booked in Gadchiroli district on the complaints of BJP MLA Milind Narote, for a post on X in which he had alleged that Modi's promises to the people were a "jumla" (rhetoric).

"Who is afraid of an FIR? Is jumla an objectionable word? I will speak the truth. They may lodge as many cases against me as they please," Yadav said.

The former Bihar deputy CM

spoke while touring Katihar along with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as part of the 'Voter Adhikari Yatra'.

Gandhi interacted with fishermen and cultivators of makhana (fox nuts) and listened to their problems, in the presence of a number of leaders.

The Union budget presented earlier this year announced the setting up of a 'makhana board' to give a boost to its production.

The day's Yatra is scheduled to conclude at Purnea town.

Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav said the BJP should have the courage to file FIR against Yadav in Bihar rather than in other states.

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Yadav dubbed the FIR as an instance of "political vendetta".

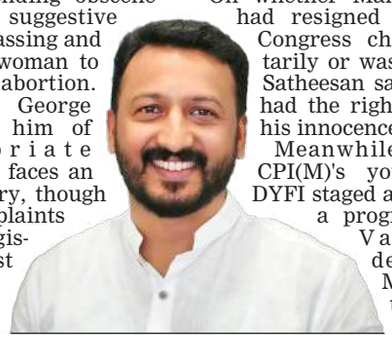
The former Bihar Congress president said that they were not intimidated by Modi and Amit Shah. —*PTI*

Cong split over harassment charges against Kerala MLA

KOCHI/KOZHIKOZE, 23 AUG

Senior Congress leaders in Kerala voiced differing opinions on Saturday over allegations of misbehaviour against MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, who resigned as state Youth Congress president.

Mamkootathil has been accused of sending obscene and sexually suggestive messages, harassing and pressuring a woman to undergo an abortion. Actress Rim George also accused him of inappropriate behaviour. He faces an internal inquiry, though no formal complaints have been registered against him.



Amid mounting protests from the BJP and the CPI(M) seeking Mamkootathil's resignation as Palakkad MLA, Opposition Leader VD Satheesan said the party was examining the issue "very seriously" and would act if required.

He also cautioned party workers against vilifying the complainants.

On whether Mamkootathil had resigned as Youth Congress chief voluntarily or was asked to, Satheesan said that he had the right to prove his innocence.

Meanwhile, the CPI(M)'s youth wing DYFI staged a protest at a programme in Vadakara, demanding Mamkootathil's resignation as MLA.

- The MLA was accused of sending obscene and sexually suggestive messages, harassing and pressuring a woman to undergo an abortion.

A brief scuffle broke out when police tried to disperse the protesters, after which they staged a sit-in demonstration.

Meanwhile, Dasmunshi, AICC general secretary in charge of Kerala said the Congress party has not received any complaint against Mamkootathil.

"This is a decision taken on moral grounds by Rahul. The Congress has always stood by moral values," she said. —*PTI*

Suspicious man held from outside Parl

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

A 20-year-old "suspicious" man was apprehended by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday from near Parliament House Complex.

The person was handed over to the police by the CISF personnel for further investigation, though nothing incriminating was recovered from him.

The incident comes a day after a man was nabbed trying scaling the wall of the high-security building.

The man came to Delhi from Bengaluru and was supposed to travel to Dubai. A copy of his Aadhaar and passport was found in his phone.

The CISF and other security agencies have put in place a "proactive" standard operating procedure for security around the Parliament complex following the August 22 incident.

Meanwhile, the tree standing at the Gaj Dwar of the new Parliament building, often used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was flagged as a security hidrance by the Special Protection Group (SPG). It will be transplanted within the complex PHOTO: PTI

As part of this procedure, any suspicious or doubtful-looking person will be proactively checked based on "profiling," and handed over to the local police, a security officer said.

Numerous people come to the Parliament complex to take pictures or enjoy its view.

Only those whose activities look suspicious or threatening are being intercepted to keep the complex safe from any untoward incident, the officer said.

The CISF was inducted to guard the complex in 2024 following the December 2023 security breach. In which two people released yellow smoke canisters inside the House while the session was on, while two others demonstrated outside. —*PTI*

Ladakh admin cancels land for Wangchuk's institute

LEH, 23 AUG

The Ladakh administration has revoked the land allotted to the Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning (HIAL) in Phyang, sparking strong protests from its founder and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk. He called the move a "witch-hunt" aimed at silencing demands for Ladakh's statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Leh Deputy Commissioner Romil Singh Donk, in an order dated 21 August, said the 1,076 kanal (53.8 hectares) allotted to HIAL "stands escheated to the State" as no recognised university had been established. The administration also cited the absence of a formal lease agreement and land handover.

HIAL co-founder and CEO Gitanjali Angmo rejected the claims, calling them "baseless". She said over 400 students had completed courses since 2017 and noted that the institute applied for UGC registration in March 2022, but the process was delayed due to Wangchuk's role in the agitation for the Sixth Schedule.

The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), leading a four-year agitation, condemned the decision, warning against attempts to "suppress Ladakhi voices".

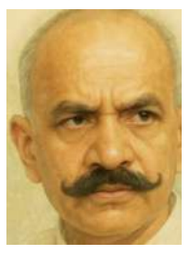
HIAL plans to challenge the order in court. —*PTI*

GUJARAT HC REVOKES REMISSION OF 1998 CONG MLA'S MURDER CONVICT

AHMEDABAD, 23 AUG

The Gujarat High Court has overturned the premature release of a TADA convict, **Aniruddhsinh Jadeja**, who had been serving a life sentence for the 1989 murder of Congress MLA Popat Sorathiya. The bench, led by Justice Hasmukh Suthar, labelled the remission as "illegal and without any authority of law," ordering Jadeja to surrender within two weeks.

- Jadeja was convicted under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act for murdering Sorathiya during a ceremony on the Independence Day in 1989.



Jadeja was convicted under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act for Sorathiya's murder during an Independence Day ceremony in 1989. Initially acquitted by a special TADA judge, he was later convicted by the Supreme Court in 1997 to life imprisonment for murder and three years' rigorous imprisonment under TADA. After absconding for nearly three years, he was apprehended.

The court found that the then Additional Director General of Police (Prison Reforms and Administration), TS Bisht, had improperly granted remission, stating the order "suffered from an inherent lack of jurisdiction."

It directed the state government to assess **Jadeja's** case for remission based on parameters set by the Supreme Court and the National Legal Services Authority's SOP within eight weeks of his surrender.

Since his release in 2018, **Jadeja** faced three FIRs, raising concerns about his actions in the community. —*PTI*

NC GOING THE BJP WAY?

Parties fume at govt takeover of schools

SRINAGAR, 23 AUG

Several political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday criticised the government's decision to take over the management of 215 schools affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), calling for the order to be revoked. The BJP, however, welcomed the move as a "much-needed intervention" in the national interest.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accused the ruling National Conference (NC) of implementing the BJP's agenda and pushing an established education system towards collapse. "Why take over the schools now, when they weren't during LG rule?" she asked, urging Education Minister Sakina Itoo to "stand up for her own people".

The Justice and Development Front (JDF), formed by former JeI members, called the move an "administrative overreach" and a "painful reminder" of the NC's "history of betrayal".

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday ordered the takeover of 215 schools run by the banned outfit Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and its affeliate Falah-e-Aam Trust PHOTO: PTI

Education Minister Sakina Itoo clarified that the schools had not been banned and would remain under government oversight only until new management committees are formed.

Peoples' Conference chief Sajad Lone criticised the NC-led administration, calling the takeover "shameful" and accusing the government of being a willing partner in controversial actions. "They are setting new standards in servility," he said.

Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari termed the decision "deeply regrettable" and unnecessary, arguing that the government should have created regulatory oversight rather than enforcing a ban. "This shows the ruling party's intolerance of ideological differences," he said, demanding immediate reversal.

- Education Minister Sakina too clarified that the schools had not been banned and would remain under government oversight only until new management committees are formed. JDF termed the move as administrative overreach

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur defended the decision, calling it vital for shielding students from "separatist narratives" and ensuring a secure, positive learning environment.

The move has sparked sharp political fault lines in the region, raising questions over educational autonomy and political intent. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

One-horned rhino found dead in Assam's Pobitora

MORIGAON, 22 AUG

The carcass of a one-horned rhinoceros was discovered in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, officials confirmed on Saturday. Forest guards found the animal near Tuplung Camp during routine patrolling on Friday evening. Authorities stated that the rhino's horn was intact, indicating no poaching. The authorities secured the horn for safekeeping. It is suspected the animal may have died of old age, but the forest officials are trying to locate the exact cause, which will be determined after a post-mortem examination. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, covering 38.85sq km in Assam's Morigaon district, is renowned for its rich grasslands and wetlands and hosts the world's highest density of one-horned rhinoceroses. *—PTI*

Woman's body found in waste pit in Kerala

KOCHI, 23 AUG

The police have discovered the partially decomposed body of a woman in a waste pit at an unoccupied house in Oonnukal in Erakulam in Kerala. Investigators suspect it is a 61-year-old woman from Vengoor, reported missing several days ago. The property belongs to a Christian priest who noticed a forced kitchen door on Wednesday and alerted police. When he returned on Friday, a foul smell led officers to the pit, where the body was recovered. Bloodstains were also found inside the house and nearby. A murder case was registered, and the body wa sent to Ernakulam Government Medical College for a post-mortem. A woman from Neriamangalam was taken into custody*—PTI*

Several booked for stir against Marwaris in T'gana

HYDERABAD, 23 AUG

Hyderabad police have filed cases against eleven individuals for allegedly promoting enmity between groups during protests at Osmania University. Demonstrators raised the slogan "Marwari go back" and reportedly called for a bandh on Friday, burning a tyre during the agitation. The protests were sparked by an incident in Secunderabad, where some Marwari individuals allegedly assaulted a man, police sources said on Saturday. In a related development, social media activist Shyam P was taken into preventive custody by Suraram police on Friday to avert potential law and order issues and was later released. Police said the measures were aimed at maintaining peace amid rising tensions.*—PTI*

Gujarat boy death: Probe reveals lapses by school

GUJARAT, 23 AUG

Initial findings into the death of 15 year old student Nayan Santani have revealed shocking lapses by his school. Investigators said a fight between Nayan and a junior lasted nearly 40 minutes, ending when he was stabbed outside the Seventh Day Adventist School in Maninagar. Despite stumbling into the campus seeking help, Nayan lay untreated for almost 30 minutes. Instead of calling for urgent medical aid, school authorities allegedly summoned a water tanker to wash away bloodstains before dialling an ambulance. The crime branch has registered a case of criminal negligence against the principal and two teachers. Principal G Immanuel has been absconding, while 40 people have been questioned by the police. *—PTI*

Space Day: ISRO unveils Bharatiya Antriksh Stn

New space initiatives include Chandrayaan-4 & Sukrayaan

BENGALURU, 23 AUG

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) marked the 'National Space Day' on Saturday unveiled a roadmap for India's ambitious space programme, including a Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) by 2035, a moon sample return mission by 2040, and a series of missions.

The initiatives include Chandrayaan 4, the fourth mission of ISRO's moon exploration programme. It is aimed at returning up to 3 kg (6.6 lb) of lunar regolith from near Shiv Shakti point, the landing site of previous mission. The ISRO will also launch the Sukrayaan or Venus Orbiter Mission, trip to Venus in 2028. The model of the country's first orbital space station, BAS was unveiled. Its first model will be launched in 2028 and it will be fully operational by 2035."

The work on a Next Generation Launcher (NGL) also has been approved.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing scientists and students said India's achievements have accorded it a unique standing in global space exploration. Achieveing milestones have become the nature of Indian scientists. India became the first to reach the moon's south pole.

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and other astronauts during the unveiling of the first look of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Recalling his interaction with with Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who had unfurled the Tricolour at the International Space Station, Modi said that India was preparing its own astronaut pool for future missions and urged the youth to be part of this group.

Modi also asked space scientists to prepare for a deep space exploration mission to unravel the secrets that brighten humanity's future.

He asked the private players whether five startups can become unicorns in the next five years.

"I would like the private sector to come forward ... can we reach a point where we can launch 50 rockets every year?" he asked space scientists and engineers.

Modi said his government possesses both the intent and the willpower to implement the next-generation reforms required to achieve this space vision. *—PTI/ Agencies*

France, India to jointly make 120 KN engine for fighter jets

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has granted approval for the prototype of the 5th-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), marking a substantial step towards bolstering India's indigenous defence capabilities. Speaking at a conference in New Delhi, Singh stated, "We are moving forward to manufacture aircraft engines in India itself," adding, "We are collaborating with a French company to start engine production in India." Although he did not specify the company, Indian media have identified Safran as the likely partner, known for its longstanding presence in the aviation and defence sectors in India.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh did not specify the French company with which India will jointly make the aircraft engine *PHOTO: INDIAN ARMY*

India, the world's largest arms importer, is prioritising the modernisation of its military while promoting local arms production. In April, India secured a multi-billion-dollar deal for 26 Rafale fighter jets, augmenting its existing fleet.

The AMCA programme, conceived in the early 2010s, experienced delays due to funding issues and bureaucratic obstacles. Initial timelines for its first flight in 2020 have now shifted to 2028.

Safran's proposal will enhance its M88 engine, aiming for a thrust output of 75-80 kN dry and 110-120 kN with afterburner. The deal includes full technology transfer and establishing a Centre of Excellence in gas turbine technology in India. *—PTI*

Syrian held in Gujarat for 'raising funds' for Gaza

AHMEDABAD, 23 AUG

Ahmedabad police have arrested a Syrian national for allegedly collecting donations from mosques in Gujarat under the pretext of helping Gaza war victims but diverting the funds to finance a lavish lifestyle.

The accused, Ali Meghat Al-Azhar, was in India on a tourist visa, police said on Saturday. Three of his alleged accomplices are on the run.

According to the Ahmedabad crime branch, the group travelled to India on tourist visas and engaged in activities violating visa rules. Officials warned that such fundraising operations could threaten national security, and central and state agencies are investigating the gang's motive. The Syrian will be deported. *—PTI*

FIR against 'The Wire' names the late Satya Pal

GUWAHATI, 23 AUG

The Guwahati Police, in its FIR against journalists Siddharth Vardarajan and Karan Thapar, also names former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik, Pakistani journalist Najam Sethi and Indian media person Ashutosh Bharadwaj, along with "unknown persons".

The FIR, filed by Guwahati resident Biju Verma alleged that in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, online news platform 'The Wire' and some of its authors and editors published a series of articles and commentaries that "prima facie undermine India's sovereignty and security, promote enmity and public disorder, and spread misinformation".

Satya Pal Malik; Siddharth Vardarajan; Karan Thapar *PHOTO: PTI*

Summon were issued to Vardarajan and Thapar to appear before the Crime Branch, but the Supreme Court protected them against "coercive action" by the police.

The SC had also shielded them in a case filed by the Morigaon Police.

- Summon were issued to Vardarajan and Thapar to appear before the Crime Branch, but the Supreme Court protected them against "coercive action" by police.

An FIR was filed against journalist, Abhisar Sharma, who will respond legally.

The FIR alleged that Karan Thapar had hosted a series of interviews on 'The Wire' with individuals such as Sethi, Bharadwaj, and former Jammu and Malik wherein "grave and offensive remarks were made. *—PTI*

BLAME IT ON LIFESTYLE

India on brink of health crisis: Doctors

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

India is on the cusp of a health crisis, with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer reaching epidemic proportions, a group of Padma awardee doctors has said.

At a session hosted by Pacific OneHealth, the doctors warned that without immediate action, India will be overwhelmed by this NCD epidemic.

Padma Shri DS Rana, chairman of board of trustees in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, underlined the need for universal access and ethical regulation, particularly in drug pricing and hospital costs, to make healthcare equitable.

Padma Shri Praveen Chandra, chairman of Interventional and Structural Heart Cardiology, Medanta, said the heart is the common pathway for multiple diseases, though emergency angioplasty saves countless lives and advanced cardiac interventions are now accessible even to elderly patients.

Endocrinologist and diabetologist, Anoop Misra, a Padma Shri awardee said that prevention and early control are critical in diabetes. One in three Delhi residents is diabetic, with another 30 per cent pre-diabetic.

Swadeep Srivastava, president and co-founder, Pacific OneHealth, observed that healthcare must evolve from a privilege to a promise, rooted in ethics, powered by innovative treatment and centred on the welfare of the patient.

"We believe the future lies in bridging preventive, primary, and tertiary care seamlessly, while ensuring no one is left behind," Srivastava said.

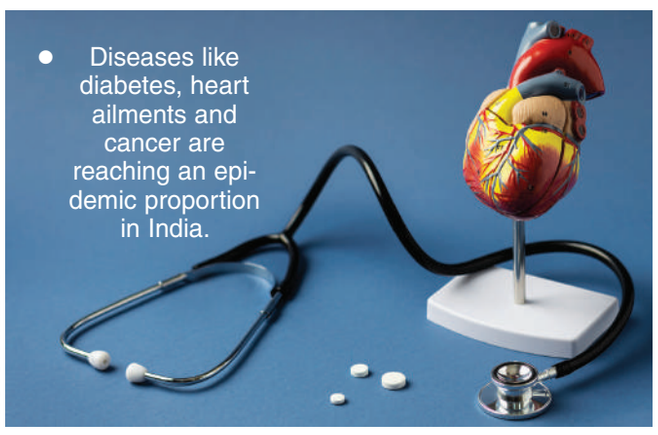


PHOTO: FREEPIK

- Diseases like diabetes, heart ailments and cancer are reaching an epidemic proportion in India.

The experts said that though India has achieved significant progress in medical technology and treatment, the unchecked rise of lifestyle diseases and lack of preventive screening are pushing the country towards a health emergency. *—PTI*

LIVES LOST

Cloudburst, rains create havoc

RANCHI/CHENNAI/ JAMMU, AUG 23

Rains and cloudburst in several states of India have created havoc, killing and injuring many people and damaging vital infrastructure.

Five people were killed, one person was missing, and several others were injured as heavy rains wreaked havoc in parts of Jharkhand.

A woman and her seven-year-old son died after their house collapsed in Dandu village in Seraikela-Kharsawan district on 22 August. Eight others were injured in the incident.

In in Kol Shimla in the district, a five-year-old died and three others were injured as the wall of a house collapsed on Saturday morning.

In Katghara in Chatra district, a couple was washed away in the swelling Siyari river on 22 August. While the body of the husband was recovered, the wife is still missing. A person was also killed in Khairatola in a rain-related incident

Incessant rains lashed Jharkhand, uprooting trees and electricity poles, damaging houses and inundating roads and farmlands. Several rivers are in spate.

The state will receive rains till 29 August.

Meanwhile a man lost his life, and two others were injured in a landslide triggered in Mahore in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. One person died when his car was caught in flash floods in Kathua district.

Moreover, a sanitation worker who inadvertently stepped on a fallen live electric wire, while wading through stagnant water at Chennai's Kannagi Nagar was electrocuted on Saturday. A solatium of Rs 20 lakh was given immediately to her family.

Thunderstorms along with rains were forecast over Chennai, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamlai, Villupuram and Nagapattinam. *—PTI*

The Subarnarekha river flows in spate after heavy rainfall in Ranchi in Jharkhand on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Kin appeals for release of man who scaled Parl wall

BHADOHI, 23 AUG

The family of 20-year-old Ram Kumar Bind, arrested for attempting to scale a wall at the Parliament complex in Delhi, is appealing for his release.

They argue he is the "sole support" of the family and may have acted without understanding the consequences. His father, Shiv Kumar Bind, revealed that Ram, along with his brother Umesh, works in a factory in Surat, Gujarat.

Ram recently returned home after his wife gave birth to a child just 12 days prior. His mother, Samla Devi, insisted he is innocent and pleaded for the government to release him, highlighting that Ram's elder brother is ill and two younger siblings have intellectual disabilities.

Bhadohi Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik stated that both Ram and his family have no prior criminal record, with investigations led by Delhi Police and other agencies ongoing.

Ram is described as "mentally incoherent." *—PTI*

8 killed, 4 injured as van collides with truck in Bihar

PATNA, 23 AUG

A head-on collision between a mini-van and a truck on the outskirts of Patna resulted in eight fatalities and four injuries on Saturday morning. The incident occurred in Shahjahanpur, close to the Patna-Nalanda border, police reported. Among the deceased, seven were women.

The injured individuals have been admitted to a nearby government hospital, with local Superintendent of Police (Rural), Vikram Singh, confirming the status of the victims. "The driver of the truck managed to flee from the spot," he added.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed his condolences to the aggreived.

"The CM expressed his deep anguish at the tragic accident in Patna and offered his condolences to the bereaved families," according to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office. This devastating event highlights ongoing concerns regarding road safety in the region. *—PTI*

J'khand medico in coma after drinking tea from canteen

RANCHI, 23 AUG

A first-year postgraduate student in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Jharkhand's Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) was placed on a ventilator following an incident of alleged poisoning after consuming tea from the hospital canteen.

The 25-year-old woman, who was on night duty, began to feel unwell soon after drinking the tea, which she had poured into a flask to consume later. "She took a couple of sips and stated it was not good and smelled bad, prompting other doctors to refrain from drinking it," an official reported.

After suddenly collapsing, she was swiftly taken to the ICU.

PHOTO: PTI

"The next 48 hours are crucial," the official added. Dr Rajiv Ranjan, a spokesperson for RIMS, noted, "We suspect this is a case of chemical poisoning, not merely food poisoning." The toxicology test has been initiated, the canteen has been sealed, and police have detained a staff member for questioning. A formal complaint has also been lodged. *—PTI*

EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

Stray dogs roam at Lodhi Garden, in New Delhi on Saturday a day after the Supreme Court ordered the civic body to release them. This comes a huge relief for 'man's best friend' and animal lovers alike
PHOTO: PTI

NOBEL LAUREATE'S VIEW

SIR risks disenfranchising the poor: Amartya Sen

Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen expressed concerns over the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, warning that the exercise, if not handled sensitively, could end up "disenfranchising" a large number of poor and marginalised people.

Sen also questioned the fairness of a bureaucratic process that demands strict documentation from citizens who may not have access to those things.

He also said that administrative processes and periodic revisions are necessary, but these must not come at the cost of fundamental rights.

"Yes, it's true that from time to time, various procedural tasks need to be carried out. However, in doing so, one cannot create a 'better system' by trampling on the rights of the poor," Sen told reporters.

He emphasised the importance of a just and inclusive approach, pointing out that many individuals still lack proper documentation and, as a result, are often excluded from the electoral process.

"Many people don't have documents. Many cannot vote...If, in the name of trying to improve things a little, harm is caused to many, then that becomes a serious mistake," Sen said, adding, "You cannot justify seven new mistakes just to correct one."

The special intensive revision of electoral rolls by the Election Commission is aimed at updating and verifying the accuracy of electoral rolls, thereby creating clean and error-free lists.

The process has drawn criticism from political parties and rights activists.

More than 65 lakh enumeration forms were 'not included' in the draft electoral rolls prepared as part of the first phase of SIR by the Election Commission (EC) in Bihar, bringing down the total number of around 7.9 crore registered voters to 7.24 crore.

The EC had come out with the names of 65 lakh people who were removed from the draft electoral rolls published as part of the SIR exercise in Bihar.

Sen's comments echo growing concerns that the SIR, without adequate safeguards, could lead to wrongful deletions of eligible voters from the rolls, an outcome that threatens the very foundation of democratic participation.

Globally acclaimed for his work on poverty, welfare, and justice, Sen also reminded that procedural improvements should not come at the cost of people's rights.

"A just system must always protect those who are most vulnerable," he said.

Sen spoke at a public discussion on the theme "India's Youth: Social Opportunities They Should Have", where he interacted with a group of undergraduate and high-school students.

During the interaction, the 91-year-old economist underscored the urgent need for India to move beyond passive tolerance towards active communal cooperation, what he described as "yukta sadhana", or "joint practice".

Citing historical precedents, the professor highlighted the contributions of Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, who translated fifty Upanishads from Sanskrit to Persian.

This pivotal work, he noted, played a crucial role in globalising Hindu philosophy, forming the basis for subsequent translations into languages such as German.

The economist also spoke of his maternal grandfather, Kshitimohan Sen, a renowned scholar and early proponent of "yukta sadhana", whose seminal work "Bharate Hindu Musalmaner Yukta Sadhana" examined the shared cultural, spiritual, and intellectual traditions of Hindus and Muslims in India. "The relationship between Hindus and Muslims is not just about tolerance. It's about collaboration, something we've seen historically in music, literature, and architecture," he said.

The book, long out of print, was relaunched by the Pratichi Trust on Friday, with a new introduction penned by the economist, reaffirming its contemporary relevance in light of rising social and political polarisation. *—PTI*

Amartya Sen also questioned the fairness of a bureaucratic process that demands strict documentation from citizens who may not have access to those things
PHOTO: PTI

> **The relationship between Hindus and Muslims is not just about tolerance. It's about collaboration, something we've seen historically in music, literature, and architecture**

> **Yes, it's true that from time to time, various procedural tasks need to be carried out. However, in doing so, one cannot create a 'better system' by trampling on the rights of the poor**

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR

Indian student visas for UK fall amid detentions

Indians granted visas to study at UK universities continued a downward trend, with the majority of Indian students opting for post-graduate level qualifications, according to the latest Home Office statistics released.

Indian students at 98,014 visa grants in the year ending June 2025 were a close second to Chinese visa grants for the same period at 99,919.

However, both nationalities registered a fall in overall numbers compared to last year, of 11 per cent and seven per cent respectively.

"The trend in sponsored study visas in recent years has been mainly driven by those coming to study for a Master's... In the year ending March 2025, four out of five (81 per cent) Indian students came to the UK to study for a Master's level qualification, compared to just over half (59 per cent) of Chinese students," the Home Office states.

New figures released to highlight the numbers detained as part of a wider crackdown on illegal immigration claimed that Indian nationals in detention have almost doubled in the past year.

"Albanians have been the most common nationality entering detention since 2022, but their numbers have been falling; numbers of Brazilian and Indian nationals have both doubled in the last year (up 91 per cent and 108 per cent respectively)," the Home Office claimed.

According to its data, 2,715 Indians were logged as being in detention under the UK's immigration law breach, with a majority of them released on bail.

The latest UK government statistics also revealed that 111,000 people had claimed asylum in the UK in the year ending in June 2025, the highest figure since comparable records began in 1979.

The asylum issue has been in sharp focus in recent weeks as the Home Office lost a major legal battle over housing asylum seekers in hotels and Opposition parties continue to mount pressure on the Labour government to speed up deportations.

The total number of immigrants, using legal and illegal routes, registered a fall of 30 per cent compared to the previous 12 months mostly down to a decrease in the number of work visas issued, a category dominated by Indians over the years.

"We are bringing legal migration back under control, with a 48 per cent reduction in work visas this year – and further stronger visa controls and higher skill requirements introduced through our White Paper expected to bring those overall numbers down further," said UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

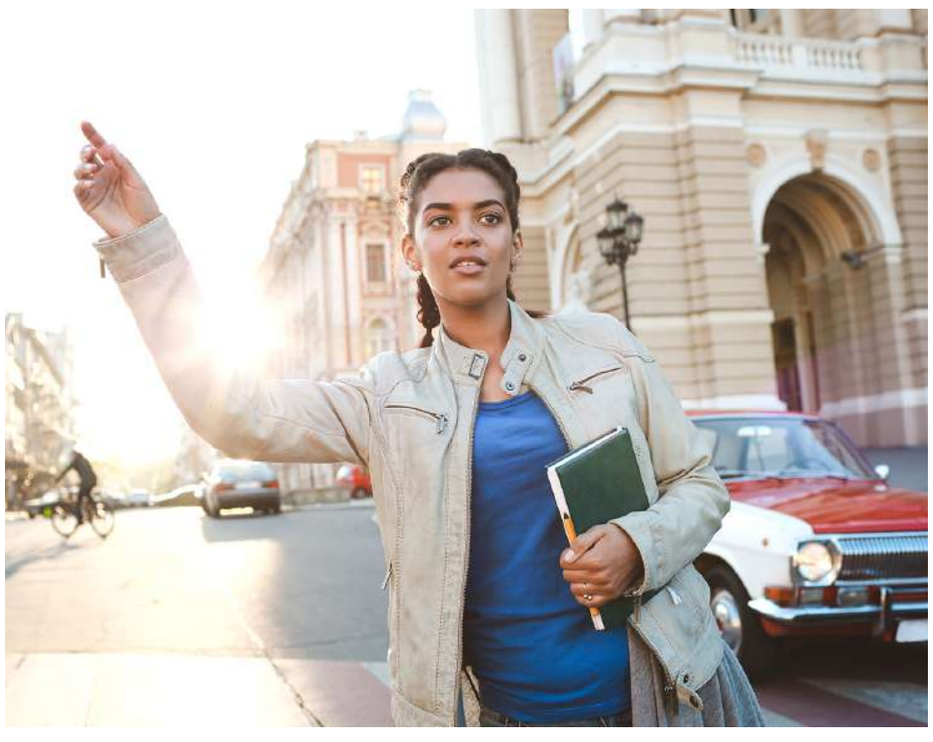
The University of Oxford based Migration Observatory analysed the Home Office data on asylum claims to flag that claims from study or work visa holders had been on the rise since Brexit five years ago.

Pakistanis and Bangladeshis topped the charts of claimants previously arriving in the UK on a valid visa, with Indians ranked sixth under this category.

"There are several potential explanations for recent increases in asylum applications, although there isn't enough evidence to be sure which have been most important. They include the intensification of smuggling activity (especially across the English Channel), larger numbers of people claiming asylum after arriving on visas, a larger number of pending and recently refused asylum seekers in Europe," said Dr Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory.

An overall fall in visas by 403,000, or 32 per cent, over the previous year is largely related to a drop in visa grants to dependent family members of skilled workers and students following tighter government norms.

"It's possible we'll see further declines in the coming months — though probably smaller ones — as the data catches up with more recent restrictions like the closure of the care worker route to overseas recruitment," said Dr Ben Brindle, researcher at the Migration Observatory. *—PTI*



2,715 Indians were logged as being in detention under immigration law breach
PHOTO: FREEPIK

All about US visa ban for truckers & politics of Florida accident

Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced this week that the US will pause issuing work visas to some foreign truck drivers, warning darkly that they are "endangering American lives and undercutting the livelihoods of American truckers."

He provided no details on Thursday in his two-sentence post on the social platform X, leaving some in the trucking industry wondering if many drivers would be affected.

The short answer: No.

But the announcement appeared to be as much about politics as road safety, coming as a deadly Florida crash involving a foreign truck driver became increasingly politicised, with the offices of two ambitious governors battling publicly over responsibility.

With the Florida crash spilling into national politics, here's what you should know:

Will many drivers be affected?

It depends on how you define "many," and the exact number isn't clear. But it appears that at most a few thousand of the country's estimated 3.5 million commercial truck drivers would be affected by the new directive.

The pause is aimed at drivers applying for three types of visas, the State Department said Friday, most notably the H-2B visa for temporary workers.

Only roughly 1,500 visas for truck drivers were issued this fiscal year under the program, and 1,400 last year, according to Jeff Joseph, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The program has helped offset what many observers see as a persistent shortage of commercial drivers.

But H-2B visas are capped for most years at 66,000, with drivers making up only a couple of per cent of the total.

The other two visa categories listed by the State Department are the E-2, for people who make substantial investments in a US business, and the EB-3, which is for skilled workers such as health care employees, IT professionals and skilled tradespeople like electricians.

Trucking groups are pleased ... and relieved.

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, a trade association representing small-business truck drivers, applauded the administration for "seeing through the myth of a truck driver shortage and continuing efforts to restore common-sense safety standards on our nation's highways."

The association dismisses talk of scarcity, saying there are often independent truckers available, but companies prefer drivers who cost less.

Jerry Maldonado of the Laredo Motor Carriers Association, a group of 200 trucking companies operating on both sides of the southern border, was relieved when the State Department released more details about Rubio's announcement.

Mexican and Canadian drivers operate in the US with B-1 visas, he said, which allow non-US citizens to enter the country briefly. Some worried those visas could also be paused.

"The announcement did scare some people, but I'm glad for the clarification," Maldonado said.

The deadly Florida crash

Rubio's announcement came after three people were killed when truck driver Harjinder Singh made an illegal U-turn on a highway, according to the state's Highway Patrol.

The announcement stopping new visas for truckers came after three people were killed when Indian-origin truck driver Harjinder Singh made an illegal U-turn on a highway
PHOTO: PTI

A nearby minivan slammed into Singh's trailer as he made the turn. Singh and his passenger were not injured.

The Department of Homeland Security said Monday that Singh, a native of India, was in the country illegally.

The crash quickly turned political, with supporters of Florida's Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, blaming California's Democratic governor, Gavin Newsom.

Both men have been mentioned as possible presidential contenders.

> **Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced this week that the US will pause issuing work visas to some foreign truck drivers, warning darkly that they are "endangering American lives and undercutting the livelihoods of American truckers."**

Homeland Security said Singh obtained a commercial driver's license in California, one of 19 states that issue licenses regardless of immigration status, according to the National Immigration Law Centre.

"Three lives lost because of Gavin Newsom. Because of California's failed policies," Florida Lt. Gov. Jay Collins said Thursday at a news conference in Stockton, California.

Singh, who flew to California after the August 12 crash, was arrested by US Marshals in that city.

DeSantis sent Collins to California to oversee Singh's return to Florida, where he is charged with three counts of vehicular homicide and immigration violations. Collins, accompanied by law enforcement personnel, escorted Singh onto the plane.

A Newsom spokesperson called Collins's trip a "photo op" and criticised Florida officials for letting a "murder suspect walk."

Safety? Or politics?

The Trump administration and Florida officials insist that their concerns centre on immigration and road safety.

In recent months, the administration has taken steps to enforce English-language proficiency requirements for truckers, following incidents in which drivers' ability to read signs or speak English may have contributed to traffic deaths.

On Friday, the State Department also said the government is launching a review of how it screens foreign drivers and "enhanced vetting" will apply to those without valid visas.

Others see things differently.

"It's part of this game to show the voters who put Trump in power that he's doing his daily job to enforce immigration," said Joseph, of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "You create fear and panic in communities that there's a bunch of illegal alien drivers on the roads." *—PTI*

Don buys 10% of Intel with $11B govt funds

The purchase comes as Intel lays off 20K workers and after Trump threatened the CEO

WASHINGTON, 23 AUG

President Donald Trump has announced that the US government has secured a 10 per cent stake in struggling Silicon Valley pioneer Intel a couple weeks after he was called the company's CEO a conflicted leader unfit for the job.

"The USA now fully owns and controls 10 per cent of INTEL, a Great American Company that has an even more incredible future," Trump wrote in a social media post on Friday.

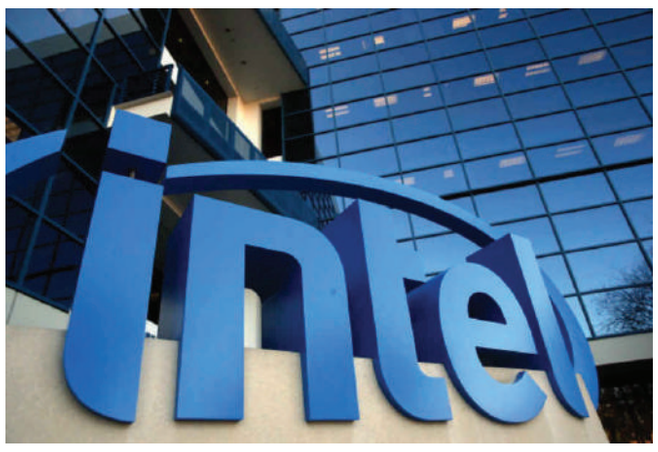
The US government is getting the stake through the conversion of $11.1 billion in previously issued funds and pledges. Altogether, the government is getting 433.3 million shares of non-voting stock priced at $20.47 apiece – a discount from Friday's closing price at $24.80. That spread means the US government already has a gain of $1.9 billion, on paper.

The turn of events makes the US government one of Intel's largest shareholders at a time when the company is in the process of jettisoning more than 20,000 workers.

Trump had earlier raised national security concerns about Intel's CEO Lip-Bu Tan's past investments in Chinese companies. On 7 Aug, Trump demanded Tan's resignation.

However, after Tan professed his allegiance to the US in a public letter and went to the White House to meet the President, Trump backed off and struck a deal with the Malaysian-born CEO.

Trump hailed Tan as "highly respected" CEO in his Friday post. *—PTI*



THE PROBLEM WITH TRUMP'S 'BLACK' MEXICO BORDER

Trump wants to paint the Mexico border black to "make it too hot" for immigrants to cross it, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem recently announced. Trump first touted this in 2019 during his first term. However, his decision is marred by several problems. Take a look:

- Approximately 0.8km of the wall is being built every day along the 3,218km border. Painting it could cost an extra $1 million per 1.62km.
- Total painting cost could be at least $500 million.
- Homeland Security allocated $46 billion in total as part of Trump's Big Beautiful Bill.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem painting the Mexico-US border *PHOTO: X*

THERE'S MORE TO THE IMPRACTICALITY...

- People could just cross at night, when the fence cool down.
- People could cross during the winters or use (makeshift) gloves.
- When Trump first tried painting the fence black, the paint peeled off a year later, exposing the fence to rust.
- Leaves one wondering, what is the logic?

> **Specifically at the request of the President, who understands that in the hot temperatures down here when something is painted black it gets even warmer.... So hot to the touch that criminal illegal aliens won't even try.**
>
> —Kristi Noem, Homeland Security Secretary

CREDIT: SIDDHARTH SALDANHA

5 including Indians killed in NY bus crash

NEW YORK, 23 AUG

A tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls crashed on Interstate 90 in Pembroke, killing five passengers and injuring many others. The bus, carrying 54 individuals, including Indian nationals, flipped over shortly before 12.30pm after the driver became distracted, according to state police Maj. Andre Ray. "An absolute tragedy took place," he said, extending thoughts and prayers to those affected. Most passengers were of Indian, Chinese, and Filipino descent, prompting authorities to use translators during the emergency response. Ray noted that preliminary investigations ruled out mechanical failure and driver impairment. Eyewitness Powell Stephens described the scene as chaotic, with "glass all over the road." *—PTI*

Rain red alert issued in Pakistan till 30 August

PESHAWAR, 23 AUG

Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a red alert, warning of heavy monsoon rains and potential landslides in various regions until 30 August. This alert follows devastating monsoon spells from 26 June to 20 August, which resulted in over 788 fatalities and 1,018 injuries, predominantly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The NDMA cautioned, "Strong monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are likely to penetrate the upper parts of the country." Torrential rains are forecast in Islamabad, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Urban flooding is anticipated in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan, while landslides could affect Swat and Chitral. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Costa Rican Prez denies corruption allegations in court

SAN JOSE, 22 AUG

In a historic first for Costa Rica, President Rodrigo Chaves defended himself before three lawmakers considering a petition to remove his immunity in light of the corruption charges. Chaves accused the attorney general and Supreme Court magistrates of orchestrating a political vendetta, following allegations that he pressured a contractor to divert the funds to a former campaign adviser. "Opposition lawmakers staged a ridiculous case to carry out a judicial coup d'état, to convince (people) I was a scoundrel," he said. The lawmakers will compile a report for Congress, which will vote on whether to lift Chaves' immunity at a later date. *—PTI*

12 workers killed in a bridge collapse in China

BEIJING, 23 AUG

A devastating collapse of an under-construction railway bridge in Qinghai province, China, has resulted in the deaths of at least 12 workers, with four others still unaccounted for, according to state media reports. Aerial photographs from the official Xinhua News Agency depict a significant section missing from the bridge's curved aquamarine arch, while a bent portion of the bridge deck dangles precariously over the Yellow River below. The incident occurred at approximately 3am on Friday, when a steel cable snapped during a tensioning operation, leaving 16 workers on-site. Search efforts employing boats, a helicopter, and robotic devices are currently ongoing. The bridge, measuring 1.6km in length, has a deck situated 55 metres above the river's surface. *—PTI*

Putin sees 'light at end of tunnel' in Russia-US ties

MOSCOW, 22 AUG

Russian President Vladimir Putin said there was "light at the end of the tunnel" for Moscow-Washington ties, as the two sides explore cooperation on projects in the Arctic and Alaska.

"As for our relations with the US, they are at an extremely low level.... However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel now that President (Donald) Trump has come to power," Putin said.

Putin said Russia and the US are discussing the possibility of working together in the Arctic and Alaska.

Putin said, "There are countries that can easily exist without sovereignty. Today, the entire Western Europe has in fact no sovereignty.... However, it's not for Russia: if Russia loses sovereignty, it will cease to exist."

Meanwhile, Trump said he will consider imposing sanctions on Russia in two weeks if the Putin-Zelenskyy meeting doesn't happen.

"I'll know in two weeks what I'm going to do. I have a pretty good idea already," Trump said. *—Agencies*

US President Donald Trump showed reporters a picture of him with Russian President Vladimir Putin *PHOTO: PTI*

Don: Chicago is next for crime crackdown

WASHINGTON, 22 AUG

Trump said Chicago will likely be the next target of his efforts to crack down on crime, homelessness and illegal immigration.

Trump indicated that the Midwestern city could receive similar treatment to what he's done in Washington, DC, where he's deployed 2,000 troops on the streets.

"I think Chicago will be our next," Trump said at the White House, later adding, "And then we'll help with New York."

The comments came as the Pentagon on Friday began ordering troops in Washington to carry firearms, though there have been no clear indications they have faced threats.

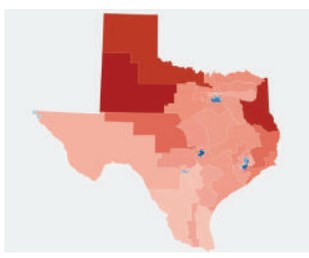
Trump has repeatedly described some of the nation's largest cities — run by Democrats, with Black mayors and majority-minority populations — as dangerous and filthy. He added, "African American ladies, beautiful ladies, are saying, Please, President Trump, come to Chicago, please.'" *—PTI*

Ghislaine: Trump didn't act inappropriately

Jeffrey Epstein's imprisoned former girlfriend denied witnessing any sexually inappropriate interactions with Trump, records released by the Justice Department said. Ghislaine Maxwell showered Trump and with praise and denied seeing Trump or former president Bill Clinton in any sexual behaviour.

Trump hints at extending TikTok ban

Trump said that he was open to a fourth extension of the deadline for when TikTok had to be separated from its Chinese owner, ByteDance, or face a ban in the US. TikTok has until mid-September. Trump said a deal may not be reached in time for the deadline next month.



Texas Senate OKs redrawn map to help Republicans

AUSTIN, 23 AUG

The Texas Senate gave final approval to a new, Republican-leaning congressional voting map early Saturday, sending it to Governor Greg Abbott for his signature.

Trump has pushed for the map to help the GOP maintain its slim majority in Congress in the 2026 midterm elections. It has five new districts that would favour Republicans.

Abbott, a Republican, is expected to quickly sign it into law. The effort by Trump and Texas' Republican-majority Legislature prompted state Democrats to hold a two-week walkout and kicked off a wave of redistricting efforts across the country. Democrats reportedly had to be locked in the House so that the vote could take place. *—PTI*

'SERIOUS PROVOCATION'

S Korea fires warning shots at North troops crossing border

SEOUL, 23 AUG

South Korea has confirmed it fired warning shots earlier this week at North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line during construction work along the tense border.

North Korea on Saturday condemned the incident as a "serious provocation." Ko Jong Chol, vice chief of the North Korean People's Army General Staff, claimed the soldiers were building barriers as part of a project to "permanently block the southern border." He accused Seoul of escalating tensions, especially as the warning shots coincided with ongoing South Korea-US military drills.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed the shots were fired Tuesday afternoon. The North Korean troops, who were carrying out unspecified construction, quickly returned to their side without further incident or return fire.

Such crossings have increased recently as North Korean forces build anti-tank barriers, lay mines, and reinforce defences amid heightened tensions. Ko said the North had informed US forces of the project in June and July to prevent clashes.

Tensions remain high as Kim Jong Un strengthens military ties with Russia and has declared the South a "permanent enemy." Seoul's new liberal President Lee Jae Myung has called for dialogue and the revival of the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement. *—PTI*

The border between North and South Korea *PHOTO: X*

Lankan ex-prez moved to ICU after remand

COLOMBO, 23 AUG

Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe was on Saturday shifted to the intensive care unit of the Colombo National Hospital, a day after he was arrested and refused bail over alleged misuse of state funds during his tenure.

He was admitted to the prison hospital as his blood sugar and blood pressure levels were high, prison spokesman Jagath Weerasinghe said. By afternoon, there was no improvement, so he was shifted to Colombo National Hospital.

He was arrested on Friday over alleged misuse of government funds. *—PTI*

Canada to drop tariffs on most US goods by 1 Sept

OTTAWA, 23 AUG

Prime Minister **Mark Carney** announced Friday that Canada will remove all tariffs on US goods covered under the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) by 1 September, CBC News reported.

However, tariffs will remain on key sectors, including steel, aluminium, and autos, as Canada continues to navigate trade tensions with the US. Despite ongoing disputes and US-imposed tariffs on Canadian exports such as copper, lumber, and energy, Carney noted that 85 per cent of Canada-US trade remains tariff-free, an advantage he called "better than what other countries have."

"It's important we do everything we can to preserve this unique advantage for Canadian workers and their families," Carney said.

The White House welcomed Canada's move, calling it "long overdue," and expressed interest in continuing discussions on trade and national security.

This decision follows US President Donald Trump's executive order on 31 July, which raised tariffs on certain Canadian goods to 35 per cent, effective immediately. The US cited fentanyl trafficking and Canada's earlier retaliatory tariffs as reasons.

Canada has imposed counter-tariffs three times, including levies on $60 billion in US goods and additional duties on US autos. The new 35 per cent US tariffs apply only to non-CUSMA goods. *—ANI*

Taiwan Oppn survives another recall vote

TAIPEI, 23 AUG

Opposition lawmakers easily survived recall votes in Taiwan on Saturday, but an opposition-backed referendum to bring back nuclear power failed.

The recall votes, the second in a month, were an attempt to restore ruling party control of the legislature after the Democratic Progressive Party lost its majority in a 2024 election.

The recall results were a second straight setback for the ruling DPP. The seven lawmakers from the opposition Nationalist Party all held onto their seats, as did 24 members of other parties in a first round of recall votes on 26 July.

The Nationalists have teamed up with a third party, the Taiwan People's Party, to pass legislation, much to the consternation of the ruling DPP.

Voters favoured a return to nuclear power by an almost three-to-one margin, but the total in favour fell short of a threshold of 25 per cent of eligible voters, or about 5 million votes, needed for approval.

The referendum was supported by 4.3 million voters and opposed by 1.5 million.

Taiwan shut down its last reactor in May under a DPP policy of phasing out nuclear power. *—PTI*

STRIPPED OF DIGNITY

Women political prisoners in Belarus face abuse, humiliation

TALLINN, 23 AUG

Women jailed for political dissent in Belarus are enduring degrading conditions, former inmates and rights groups say.

Antanina Kanavalava, 37, who spent four years in a penal colony, recalls constant fear. She nearly lost custody of her two children after her arrest, her eyesight worsened while sewing uniforms in dim light, and she lacked basic hygiene supplies. "Women in prison go through hell and can't even complain to anyone," she said after her release in December. "The head of the prison told me people like me should be shot."

Women prisoners in Belarus don't get sanitary products *PHOTO: X*

Belarus has nearly 1,200 political prisoners, including 178 women. All face unheated cells, isolation, poor food and health care, but UN experts say women are especially vulnerable to arbitrary punishment, solitary confinement, and separation from children.

Palina Sharenda-Panasiuk, 50, spent more than four years behind bars, including 270 days in solitary. In a KGB detention centre without hot water, she used tea to wash herself. She described conditions where untreated illnesses "become chronic due to the constant cold." *—PTI*

Israel strikes kill at least 25 in Gaza, mostly aid seekers

KHAN YOUNIS, 23 AUG

Palestinians sheltering in tents or seeking scarce food aid were among at least 25 people killed by Israeli strikes and shootings Saturday in Gaza, according to local hospitals, as the world confronted the famine now gripping Gaza's largest city.

Strikes killed at least 14 people in the southern Gaza Strip early Saturday. The strikes targeted tents sheltering displaced people in Khan Younis. More than half of the dead were women and children.

Israeli gunfire also killed at least five aid-seekers near the Zikim crossing, where UN and other agencies' convoys enter the enclave. *—PTI*

US hints at potential tax cuts amid shaky job market

WASHINGTON DC, 23 AUG

Chair of the Federal Reserve of the US Jerome Powell said on Friday that the US job market is on such shaky ground that the Federal Reserve may soon need to cut interest rates to support the economy, CNN reported.

In one of his most consequential speeches, Powell suggested the labor market could benefit from lower rates, which the Federal reserve has kept unchanged for eight straight months.

"Downside risks to employment are rising," Powell said in prepared remarks for his keynote speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He said the possibility of Trump's tariffs having only a short-lived effect on inflation is "reasonable," as per CNN.

- Powell's Jackson Hole remarks come at an inflection point in the central bank's 111-year history

The Jackson Hole conference is typically a major event in the world of central banking in which the Fed chair sets the tone for the rest of the year, but it has a radically different backdrop this year, as reported by CNN.

Powell's Jackson Hole remarks, come at an inflection point in the central bank's 111-year history. The Fed -- and Powell in particular -- has been subject to an unprecedented onslaught on attacks from the White House since Trump began his second term in January, CNN reported.

Trump continues to demand massive rate cuts as his administration actively searches replacement for Powell after his term. *—ANI*

PHOTO: AI

CBI books Anil Ambani & Rcom in ₹2.9K cr fraud case

CBI conducted search on premises of RCom & Anil Ambani's home

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 23 AUG

The CBI searched the Mumbai residence of Reliance Communication Ltd. (RCOM) Director Anil Ambani on Saturday after recently registering a case over the alleged defrauding of State Bank of India of Rs 2,929.05 crore, officials said.

Teams of CBI conducted the searches at two locations in Mumbai on Saturday -- the official premises of Reliance Communication Ltd (RCom) and residential premises of Anil D Ambani, the agency said in a statement.

CBI action took place after the agency registered an FIR on Thursday against RCom, Mumbai, Ambani, unknown public servants and unknown others on the basis of a complaint from SBI, it said.

The searches took place at Ambani's residence 'Sea Wind' at Cuffe Parade in Mumbai, sources said.

Anil Ambani was earlier summoned by the Enforcement Directorate in the loan fraud case **PHOTO: PTI**

According to the SBI complaint, now part of the FIR, the company had an outstanding of over Rs 40,000 crore to various lenders with the public sector bank alone facing a loss of Rs 2,929.05 crore, according to 2018 figures.

The complaint filed by State Bank of India (SBI) pertains to matters dating back more than 10 years, said the statement from the spokesperson on behalf of the businessman.

At the relevant time, he was a Non-Executive Director of the company, with no involvement in the day-to-day management, the statement said.

At present, Reliance Communications is being managed under the supervision of a Committee of Creditors, led by SBI and overseen by a Resolution Professional, the statement said. "The matter remains sub judice, pending before the NCLT and other judicial forums, including the Supreme Court, for the past six years," it said.

Ambani has duly challenged SBI's declaration before the competent judicial forum, it said. CBI said it booked Ambani and RCom for allegedly committing offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust.

SBI complaint stated, RCom, Reliance Infratel Ltd (RITL) and Reliance Telecom Ltd (RTL), both subsidiaries of RCom, cumulatively received Rs.31,580 crores from banks. *—PTI*

TO AFFECT 3L+ WORKERS

Trump threatens tariff on imported furniture

WASINGTON DC, 23 AUG

US President Donald Trump on Friday threatened fresh tariffs on imported furniture, announcing a formal investigation into the sector. "We are doing a major Tariff Investigation on Furniture coming into the United States," he posted on Truth Social, adding that the probe would be completed within 50 days.

The tariff rate is yet to be decided, but Trump said the move aims to revive US furniture industry, particularly in states like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Michigan. As of July, US furniture manufacturing sector employed around 3,40,000 workers.

China and Vietnam remain the top sources of US furniture im ports, with US importing $25.5 billion worth in 2024, according to Furniture Today.

A US official told Bloomberg the probe is being conducted by the Commerce Department under Section 232 of Trade Expansion Act, which permits tariffs on goods critical to national security.

The probe began on 10 March, with results due within 270 days, though Trump could act soon.This adds to a growing list of sector-specific tariff threats.

Since returning to office, he has imposed or launched probes targeting steel, aluminum, autos, copper, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and wind energy, citing national security. *—Agencies*

India cuts minimum export price for honey

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Central government has lowered Minimum Export Price for natural honey exports from $2,000 to $1,400 per metric tonne according to a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade. The revised price will remain in effect until 31 December, while the export policy for natural honey continues to be categorised as "Free", provided exporters comply with updated price condition. Additonally, government has revised import policy for specific categories of paper and paperboard, introducing a Minimum Import Price (MIP) for Virgin Multi-layer Paper Board. A notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade states that imports will incur a MIP of Rs 67,220 per metric ton on a Cost, Insurance and Freight basis. *—ANI*

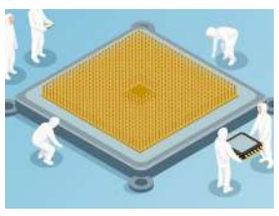


PHOTO: FREEPIK

India to get new semiconductor projects soon

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) may soon unveil two to three small semiconductor projects, utilising leftover funds from the $10 billion Semicon India 1.0 initiative. Most of the fund has already been committed, with $7.3 billion for chip fabs, $1.14 billion for the Mohali lab, and US Rs 1,000 crore for design-linked incentives. Talks are ongoing with the Finance Ministry on Semicon 2.0. The announcement precedes SEMICON India 2025, to be inaugurated by PM Modi on 2 September at Yashobhoomi, Delhi. The event has doubled in scale, with 350+ exhibitors, 33 countries, and 50+ CXOs participating. India's first commercially made chips are expected by year-end. Global players like TSMC, IBM, and Tata Electronics will also attend. *—PTI*

India's seafood exports flat at $7.45B for 2024-25

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

India's seafood exports have remained flat at $7.45 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25, according to a statement from the commerce ministry. In volume terms, shipments fell to 1.7 million tonnes, down from 1.78 million tonnes worth $7.38 billion in 2023-24. "India shipped 1,698,170 tonnes of seafood worth Rs 62,408.45 crore during 2024-25," the ministry said. Among the various seafood categories, frozen shrimp was the standout item, leading in both quantity and value. US and China emerged as the largest importers of Indian seafood, with exports to US valued at $2.71 billion—an increase from $2.55 billion in the previous year. Exports to China reached $1.27 billion, while EU imported seafood worth $1.12 billion. *—PTI*

Sebi mulls new auction rules for liquid stocks

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Markets regulator Sebi has proposed a new Closing Auction Session (CAS) framework in the equity cash market, beginning with highly liquid derivative stocks. Aimed at improving price discovery, fairness, and reducing volatility, the session would determine the final share prices through a transparent auction mechanism. CAS will initially apply to liquid derivative stocks and later expand to others. It will run separately from 3.15pm to 3.35pm, split into four phases: reference price calculation, order entry, random close, and final matching. Index derivatives will still close at 3.30pm, and near-month stock derivatives at 3.35pm on expiry days. CAS will operate within a 33 per cent band around a reference price, based on VWAP between 3pm and 3.15pm. *—PTI*

'Amazon lobbies for ease on Indian export curbs'

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Amazon is actively lobbying the Indian government to relax its foreign investment regulations, aiming to enable the US firm to purchase goods directly from Indian sellers for sale in international markets. Currently, India prohibits companies like Amazon and Walmart from stocking and selling products directly to consumers, restricting them to functioning solely as e-commerce marketplaces that connect buyers and sellers for a fee.

This policy, which seeks to protect small retailers, also extends to exports. Amazon executives met with officials from the Indian Commerce Ministry on Thursday, advocating for an exemption on export transactions that would permit Amazon India to directly acquire goods from sellers for international sale. The discussions took place amid ongoing tensions between New Delhi and Washington over trade relations.

Opposition from three industry groups representing small retailers was expressed during the meeting, as they voiced concerns that Amazon, Flipkart have historically disadvantaged smaller Indian retailers by promoting large sellers and offering discounts that undermine local businesses.

Amazon staunchly asserts that it complies with Indian laws, and noted it had helped generate $13 billion in cumulative exports for Indian sellers since 2015, with a goal to reach $80 billion by 2030. During the meeting, Amazon argued that exempting exports from current rules could facilitate customs clearance processes and enhance access for small sellers to international markets.

However, internal government documents reveal that New Delhi has yet to make a decision, emphasising the need to ensure any regulatory changes do not permit foreign e-commerce firms to sell directly to Indian consumers. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: ANI

- Amazon executives met with officials from the Indian Commerce Ministry on Thursday, advocating for an exemption on export transactions that would permit Amazon India to directly acquire goods from sellers for international sale

India's forex reserves surge to $695.10 billion, says RBI

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

India's foreign exchange reserves climbed by USD 1.48 billion to reach USD 695.10 billion in the week ending 15 August, according to the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The increase was primarily driven by a jump in foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of forex reserves, which rose by USD 1.92 billion to USD 585.90 billion.

However, the RBI data revealed that gold reserves fell by USD 2.16 billion, standing at USD 86.16 billion. Meanwhile, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by USD 41 million to USD 18.78 billion, and India's reserve position with IMF rose by USD 15 million to USD 4.75 billion.

In the previous week ending 8 August, reserves had risen by USD 4.75 billion to USD 693.62 billion, supported by gains in both FCA and gold holdings.

So far in 2025, India's forex reserves have grown by nearly USD 53 billion, following an addition of USD 20 billion in 2024 and USD 58 billion in 2023, reversing a decline of USD 71 billion in 2022.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra stated that the current reserves are sufficient to cover 11 months of imports, ensuring a strong buffer against global financial volatility. *—ANI*

CCPA fines VLCC Rs 3 lakh for misleading ads

NEW DEKHI, 23 AUG

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed Rs 3 lakh fine on VLCC Ltd for publishing misleading advertisements related to slimming treatments.

In a statement on Saturday, the Department of Consumer Affairs said the penalty has been imposed on VLCC "for publishing misleading advertisements regarding fat-loss and slimming treatments through the use of the US-FDA approved CoolSculpting procedure/machine."

The department said the VLCC matter came into notice through a complaint and monitoring of ads in the beauty sector.

During the investigation, CCPA found that VLCC's advertisements projected CoolSculpting and related procedures as a permanent weight-loss and size-reduction solution.

Sharing details on its misleading ads, CCPA said that some of the alleged claims are -- "Lose up to 600g and 7cm in 1 session"; "Drop one size in one hour"; "VLCC brings you a ground-breaking fat reduction treatment"; and "Drop 1 Size in 1 session permanently". *—PTI*

Musk's new firm Macrohard to replicate Microsoft via AI

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has announced the launch of a new company, Macrohard, aimed at challenging Microsoft's dominance in the software sector by harnessing the power of artificial intelligence.

In a post on X, Musk confirmed the project, saying: "It's a tongue-in-cheek name, but the project is very real!" He explained that since companies like Microsoft do not manufacture hardware, AI could potentially simulate their entire software ecosystem.

According to filings with the US Patent and Trademark Office on 1 August, Musk's AI venture xAI applied for firm's trademark. The application suggests Macrohard will focus on AI-powered software, including tools for generating human-like speech and text, designing and coding video games, and developing advanced AI-driven applications.

Musk hinted Macrohard's technology will integrate hundreds of specialised coding and image/video generation agents, working collaboratively to emulate human interaction within virtual environments.

The move comes amid Musk's turbulent relationship with Microsoft and CEO Satya Nadella, oscillating between rivalry and collaboration. While Musk has criticised Microsoft's reliance on OpenAI, its models continue to power Microsoft's Copilot features. *—Agencies*

'DOUBLE WHAMMY FOR CUSTOMERS'

Delhi HC raps restaurant over charging ₹100 for ₹20 water bottle

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

When you are already charging more on MRP in the name of the experience, why are you then levying service charge, the Delhi High Court asked the restaurant association on Friday.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela posed the query to the counsel representing the associations for hotels and restaurant, who moved court against a single judge's order.

The single judge of the high court in March held restaurants cannot mandatorily levy service charge on food bills in a "camouflaged and coercive" manner as it is against public interest and amounts to unfair trade practice.

PHOTO: ANI

The high court division bench on Friday said restaurants were charging the visitor under three components -- food items sold, providing ambience and serving.

This service charge should include that also, the bench added.

The bench asked the counsel for the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and Federation of Hotels and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) through an example that when the restaurants were charging Rs 100 for a Rs 20 water bottle, why the customer will have to pay an addition charge for the services it provides?

On 28 March the order said collection of service charge was a "double whammy" for consumers who were forced to pay Goods and Services Tax on top of the service tax. *—PTI*

S Korean firm to start India's 1st footwear plant

CHENNAI, 23 AUG

South Korea's Hwaseung Footwear Group will establish its first Indian non-leather footwear manufacturing unit in Tamil Nadu with an investment of Rs 1,720 crore, Industries Minister TRB Rajaa announced.

The facility, to be located in Tuticorin, is expected to generate 20,000 direct jobs.

"Hwaseung has committed to a large-scale plant, their first production base in India," Rajaa said, following a meeting between Chief Minister MK Stalin and company executives.

This investment follows the TN Rising Investors Conclave held in Tuticorin on 4 August, where 41 MoUs worth Rs 32,553.85 crore were signed, promising 49,845 jobs. *—PTI*

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan laid the foundation stone for the Adani Logistics Park in Kalamassery **PHOTO: X/Pinarayi Vijayan**

Kerala CM lays foundation for Adani Logistics Park

KOCHI, 23 AUG

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has laid the foundation stone for the Adani Logistics Park in Kalamassery, a key development under the state government's 'Invest in Kerala' initiative. The project spans 70 acres with an initial investment exceeding Rs 600 crores, signalling a significant step in Kerala's industrial advancement.

Vijayan described the project as pivotal to state's industrial history, aimed at creating about 1,500 jobs and boosting local economic growth.

Ashwani Gupta, Whole-Time Director & CEO of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ), stated, "This Logistics Park marks a significant milestone in APSEZ's evolution into a fully integrated transport and logistics enterprise." He added, "It will strengthen our logistics presence in southern India and support local manufacturing." *—PTI/ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kajal becomes U-20 Wrestling World Champion

SAMOKOV, 23 AUG

Showing superb consistency through age groups, Kajal, a World under-17 champion in 69kg last year and a silver medallist in 73kg last month, defeated China's Yuqi Liu 8-6 in a hard-fought summit clash to emerge as the 72kg champion at the World under-20 wrestling championships in Samokov, Bulgaria, on Saturday. Hailing from a wrestling family of Lath village in Sonipat district of Haryana, 17-year-old Kajal – who took to wrestling after getting inspired by her uncle and former international wrestler Krishan Donchak – relied on her strong defence to thwart a late fightback from Yuqi in the last minute to add another gold to her Asian under-20 crown in 76kg in July.—*PTI*

Arjun-Elavenil pair bags 10m air rifle mixed team gold

SHYMKENT, 23 AUG

India's Arjun Babuta and Elavenil Valarivan bagged the gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event of the 16th Asian Shooting Championship here on Saturday. The Indian pair outclassed China's Dingke Lu and Xinlu Peng 17-11 to finish on top of the podium. The Chinese pair was leading in the initial round, but the Indians, who faltered early with shots of 9.5 and 10.1, made a stirring comeback in the later rounds to claim the gold. It was the second gold medal for Elavenil in the event after finishing at the top of the table in the 10m air rifle women's competition. Earlier, the Indian trio of Babuta, Rudrankksh Patil, and Kiran Jadhav had clinched the team gold in the men's 10m Air Rifle event. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@ARYNA

Sabalenka eyes decade-long record in US Open

DUBAI, 23 AUG

It has been more than a decade since the US Open had a repeat women's champion, but world number one Aryna Sabalenka heads into her title defense at Flushing Meadows aiming to buck that trend. "My thought is to change that," the Belarusian star said Friday as she spoke to reporters at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, where the final Grand Slam of the season begins on Sunday. "But, wow, that's insane, you know, how unpredictable women's tennis is, right? Should we change it? Should we try at least to change it?" The last woman to win back-to-back US Open titles was Serena Williams, who won three in a row from 2012 through 2014.—*PTI*

Aditi Ashok cuts, lies 21st on LPGA

MISSISSAUGA, 23 AUG

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok added a two-under 69 to her first round of 71 to ensure the halfway cut at the CPKC Women's Open on the LPGA Tour here. At 2-under for two rounds, she is tied-21st and trails the leader, Akie Iwai (64-69) by seven shots. Indian-American Gurleen Kaur, who was runner-up a week ago, also cut with a 74-68 and was tied for 45th, but Savannah Grewal (75-73) missed the cut. —*PTI*

Messi will come to Kerala, play a match in November

Lionel Messi PHOTO: PTI

T'PURAM, 23 AUG

Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman on Saturday confirmed that the Argentina football team, along with star player Lionel Messi, will arrive in Kerala to play a friendly match in November this year.

He was speaking to reporters here following the Argentina Football Association's (AFA) announcement that their national team, led by manager Lionel Scaloni, would play friendly matches in Luanda, Angola, and Kerala.

Abdurahiman said the state had initially requested AFA to schedule the match in either October or November this year. "Initially, AFA planned it for 2026. However, we contacted them and requested that they hold the match in Kerala this year. Now, AFA has officially confirmed it. We intend to bring the Argentina squad that won the 2022 World Cup," the minister said.

Expressing his happiness, Abdurahiman added, "A lot of effort has gone into bringing the Argentina football team to Kerala. We have started planning the rest of the arrangements and will soon discuss the details, including the venue, with the Chief Minister".

He said several lakh football fans in the state are eagerly awaiting the match. "We intend to provide a platform for fans to see Messi play in Kerala," he said.

The minister further stated that the Union sports ministry and the Reserve Bank of India have approved the event and that a government order had been issued in this regard.

Regarding the opposition team, he said, "We will select a team from among FIFA's top 50. Several teams have approached us. The Australian football team has expressed interest, and we also have a sports exchange agreement with them. Similarly, three or four other teams have contacted us." —*PTI*

Spurs stun City at Etihad to secure an easy 2-0 win

Erling Haaland and Tijjani Reijnders failed to fire

LONDON, 23 AUG

Manchester City's troubles from last season were exposed once more in a humbling 2-0 home defeat to Tottenham on Saturday that raised questions over their quest to regain the Premier League title.

Brennan Johnson and Joao Palhinha struck for the Europa League winners just before half-time as Spurs went top of the table, making it a perfect start for Thomas Frank after two league games in charge.

Erling Haaland and Tijjani Reijnders failed to fire, as Pep Guardiola's Man City suffered defeat in their first home game of the season. City's run of four consecutive titles came to a spectacular end last season as they finished a distant third behind Liverpool and Arsenal.

A 4-0 thrashing of Wolves on the opening weekend of the campaign showed glimpses of a new-look City back to their best. However, a series of defensive issues remain unresolved, while manager Pep Guardiola must decide on who will be his number one goalkeeper going forward after a day to forget for James Trafford. The England international retained his place in goal despite the return to fitness of Ederson. The Brazilian is reportedly on the verge of joining Turkish giants Galatasaray, which would free up City to make a move for out-of-favour Paris Saint-Germain keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. City's failure to get those deals done before the final week of the transfer window came back to haunt them in a familiar tale for Guardiola's men against Tottenham. In the last 13 Premier League meetings between the sides, City have won just four despite several changes of management at Spurs in that time. —*PTI*

Joao doubled Tottenham's lead before half-time and frustrated Erling Haaland

PHOTO: X/@SPURSOFFICIAL

2026 CWG & ASIAN GAMES

Nat'l record holder quartermiler Vishal eyes podium finish

NEW DELHI, 23 AUG

After breaking the national record, quarter-miler Vishal TK now hopes to secure a podium finish in next year's Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Vishal shattered the national record in the men's 400m event at the National Inter-State Senior Athletics Champion ships 2025 in Chennai on Thursday en route to a gold. "I tested myself, I did hard work, and if you do hard work, it will come through," Vishal told PTI in an interaction. The 21-year-old athlete won the gold medal with a time of 45.12 seconds, eclipsing the previous national mark of 45.21s seconds, set by Muhammed Anas Yahiya at the 2019 Czech Athletics Champion ships. "Next year, I have the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, and we have to work for it. I am still learning. I will end this season after this competition, and the coach is already planning for the next season. My goal is to get medals in individual and relays in CWG and Asian Games," he added. Vishal's previous best was 45.57s while finishing fourth at the 2025 Asian Championships in May in South Korea, where he was a member of India's gold-winning mixed 4x400m relay team and silver-winning men's 4x400m relay quartet. With his 45.12s under his belt after a scorching run, Vishal became the fourth fastest Asian 400m runner of the season. Vishal credits his achievements to his childhood coach, Srinivasan, for his success. "In 2022 and 2023, I was doing 100 and 200 metres sprints, then I changed to 400m on the advice of my coach Srinivasan from Trivandrum. —*PTI*

Vishal TK PHOTO: PTI

Cristiano Ronaldo scores 100th goal for Al Nassr

DUBAI, 23 AUG

Cristiano Ronaldo on Saturday scored his 100th goal for Saudi Arabian side Al Nassr during the Saudi Super Cup final against Al Ahli at the Hong Kong Stadium.

The talisman converted from the spot for Al Nassr in the 41st minute to put his side ahead.

With the strike, Ronaldo became the first player to record 100 goals or more for four clubs and his national team.

Ronaldo had 145 goals for Manchester United, 450 goals for Real Madrid, and 101 goals for Juventus. For Portugal, the 40-year-old has netted 138 times, making him the highest goalscorer in international football. His first club, Sporting CP, is the only team for which Ronaldo did not record 100 goals. —*PTI*

Cristiano Ronaldo PHOTO: PTI

SHUBMAN MAY MISS DULEEP

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Gill is "unwell" and might miss the upcoming Duleep Trophy, starting in Bengaluru in the last week of August. Gill was recently named the captain of the North Zone team.

"The physios recently examined him and submitted a health status report to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) about 24 hours ago. At present, Gill (25) is in Chandigarh, resting at home," the report published on Saturday said., The report added that "officials within the BCCI and selection committee national and zonal" did not respond to questions about Gill's availability, but "sources close to the India Test skipper confirmed" the development. —*PTI*

DURAND CUP 2025

NorthEast United retains title

GUWAHATI, 23 AUG

NorthEast United defended the Durand Cup title with a dominating 6-1 win over Diamond Harbour in the final at Vivekananda Yuva Bharati Krirangan, Kolkata, on Saturday.

For NorthEast United FC, the victory not only brought them their second successive Durand Cup crown but also etched their name alongside giants of Indian football, as they have become the first team to retain the title in the last 34 years. The summit clash was a one-sided affair with NEUFC having all the fun.

Himanta congratulates North East United FC

North East United FC has retained the Durand Cup trophy. In the final on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma congratulated North East United FC for lifting the Durand Cup for the second time in a row on Saturday. "The Highlanders have done it again," Sarma said in a post on X, referring to the team from the North East region. "For the second consecutive year, @NEUtdFC have lifted the #DurandCup defeating Diamond Harbour FC by 6-1 in Asia's oldest football tourney," he added. —*PTI*

Maria and Bryan brothers to be inducted into Hall of Fame

DUBAI, 23 AUG

Maria Sharapova has never been the type to look back on her accomplishments. Joining the International Tennis Hall of Fame has given her a chance to do just that."Wow, there was a lot of sacrifice. There was a lot of hard work," she said on Friday, a day before she was to be enshrined along with the dominating doubles brothers, Bob and Mike Bryan. "And, boy, was it worth it."Maria Sharapova, 38, is being inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame (ITHF) during this weekend's festivities in Newport, Rhode Island.

Sinquefield Cup: Pragg draws with Lagrave; Gukesh survives Duda

ST. LOUIS, 23 AUG

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out an easy and quick draw with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, while World champion D Gukesh survived anxious moments before splitting the point with Duda Jan-Krzysztof in the fifth round of the Sinquefield Cup here.

On a day when all five games were drawn, Fabiano Caruana of the United States maintained his sole lead on 3.5 points after signing a peace with compatriot Wesley So. In other games, US' Samuel Sevian continued with his solid performance and drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, while compatriot Levon Aronian drew with Frenchman Alireza Firouzja. Post the halfway stage in this nine-round event, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour, Caruana is followed by Praggnanandhaa and Aronian and a pack of five players, Gukesh, Firouzja, Wesley, Sevian, and Vachier-Lagrave, share the fourth spot with 2.5 points apiece.

Not far behind is Duda on two points, and still at the bottom is Abdusattorov on one point. Praggnanandhaa had to do little with his black pieces as the Rossolimo Sicilian by Vachier-Lagrave presented zero troubles. —*PTI*

Bist, Shafali's 50s put India Women in a strong position

BRISBANE, 23 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

India A woman survived a hundred by Sianna Ginger and Amy Edgar's four-wicket haul to take a good grip over Australia A on the penultimate day of the four-day lone unofficial Test here on Saturday. India closed the day at 260 for eight, for an overall lead of 254 runs, after opener Shafali Verma (52) and middle-order batter Raghavi Bist (86) made fighting half-centuries. Earlier, Australia, starting from overnight 158 for five, posted 305 in their first innings to take a slender lead of six runs.

Ginger, overnight 24, helped the home side recover from a shaky 158 for five, in the company of late order batters with a gritty 103 off 138 balls. —*PTI*

KANE HITS HAT TRICK

Bayern routs Leipzig 6-0 in Bundesliga opener

BERLIN, 23 AUG

Harry Kane scored a hat trick as Bayern Munich started its Bundesliga title defense with a 6-0 demolition of Leipzig on Friday night.

The Bavarian powerhouse dominated except for 15 minutes after halftime when Antonio Nusa went close for the visitors.

Nusa, who also had a goal ruled out, served to only rile more goals from Kane, who was supported by the outstanding Michael Olise, who scored two, and Luis Díaz, who got the other goal and set up two on his Bundesliga debut.

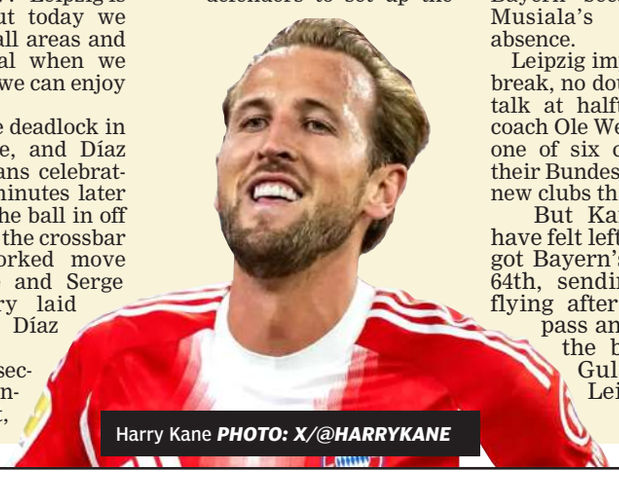
"We wanted to come out with a statement and that's exactly what we've done," Kane told Sky TV. "Leipzig is a good side, but today we were on top in all areas and we were clinical when we needed to be, so we can enjoy this."

Olise broke the deadlock in the 27th minute, and Díaz had the home fans celebrating again five minutes later when he rifled the ball in off the underside of the crossbar after a well-worked move involving Kane and Serge Gnabry. Gnabry laid the ball off for Díaz with his heel.

Olise got his second goal two minutes after that, facilitated by Gnabry, who eased past two Leipzig defenders to set up the French winger. Olise was playing in a central role for Bayern because of Jamal Musiala's injury-induced absence.

Leipzig improved after the break, no doubt after a stern talk at halftime from new coach Ole Werner. Werner is one of six coaches making their Bundesliga debuts with new clubs this weekend.

But Kane, who must have felt left out earlier on, got Bayern's fourth in the 64th, sending a defender flying after taking Díaz's pass and then tucking the ball past Péter Gulácsi in the Leipzig goal. —*PTI*



Harry Kane PHOTO: X/@HARRYKANE

Talwar fires 2-under 69, tied 11th at Dutch Futures

SPIJK, 23 AUG

Saptak Talwar holed two late birdies in the last six holes to ensure a solid 2-under 69 in the second round of Dutch Futures here.

Going along with his first round 70, he is now 3-under for two rounds and placed Tied-11th, up 14 places on the leaderboard from the first round.

This gives him a chance to play for his first top-10 finish of the season.

Talwar began from the tenth and shot three birdies and one bogey in the second round. He birdied the 15th, fourth, and sixth and dropped his only bogey on the second. —*PTI*